



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

MAGAZINE

*Towards World-Class
Quality Education & Training*



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40 ans

Our Vision

Valued qualifications for employability and lifelong learning

Our Mission

To continuously enhance good practices and relevant expertise to safeguard public interest in quality education and training

What We Do

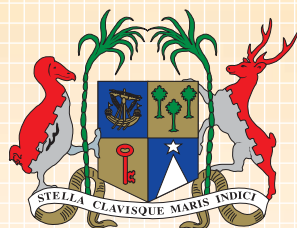
Develop, implement and maintain the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Ensure compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation of training institutions

Ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable

Recognise and evaluate qualifications for the purpose of establishing their equivalence

Recognise and validate competencies acquired outside the formal education and training systems



Prime Minister
Republic of Mauritius
Message

I am pleased to be associated with the publication of a souvenir magazine by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority to mark the 40th Independence anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius.

Over the six years of its existence, the regulatory body for the technical, vocational education and training sector has set standards and ensured compliance therewith. It is now taking up the challenge of implementing the National Qualifications Framework, in a context of fast modernisation and the emergence of new sectors. More and more people will be motivated to go for lifelong learning, re-skilling and continuous skills improvement. In this endeavour, the recognition of prior learning will help to give the required momentum to training.



By providing free education and free transport to students, the Government is helping all children, irrespective of their socio-economic background, to bring out their full potential to grow up into responsible citizens.

As we celebrate our nation's 40th Independence anniversary, it is an opportune time to look back on the achievements in the field of education and training in the country and to pay tribute to all those who contributed to the education and training of our people.

I wish the Authority full success in its endeavours.

Dr the Hon Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun
Acting Prime Minister



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Message from the Minister of Education & Human Resources



I would like to extend my warmest greetings and congratulations to the MQA for the production of this Souvenir magazine in the context of the 40th Independence Anniversary of the country.

With the MQA now into its 6th year of operation, the institution is keeping the flag high in its task of regulating qualifications in the country. In the context of reforms at the Ministry, the Authority is spearheading initiatives in consolidating the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

MQA is also called upon to play a key role in harmonizing the establishment of unit standards and the development of a framework for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the context of a fast wave of industrialization and modernization of the country where the experience of our human resource is a key asset yet to be fully tapped.

Indeed, through the achievement of new qualifications in an era of life-long learning, our manpower now has to be constantly developing and moving ahead to face new opportunities. The emergence of new economic pillars is an indication that we are on our way to making fundamental changes in every field. It will be essential to ensure that quality training and awards are sustained in technical areas. We are in a world of work with shifting and evolving standards and new breakthroughs in key emerging sectors require the delivery of technology-oriented training, in order to provide society with highly creative professionals. Our specialists in technical and vocational areas must be capable of undertaking diverse jobs from teaching, designing and managing top-notch production processes.

The HR Division of my Ministry, and the Authority, are now called upon to play a key task in ensuring that all qualifications are of a world class standard and in line with the needs not only of the local economy but also those of the region. MQA is playing a leading role in such regional initiatives such as the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework within the SADC region.

This initiative of ventilating all good practices in this area through the production of a magazine in the context of the 40th anniversary of our nation is a most laudable one, and I trust this will be emulated by other parastatals. I am confident that the MQA team is fully committed to meet the new challenges, and wish to assure you that my Ministry will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the institution achieves its targets.

Thank you.

D. Gokhool
Minister

Message from Mr. R. S. Soomarooah, Chairman

The first official publication from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) is being launched in order to celebrate our 40th Independence Day as well as to promote important issues in the world of education and training.

Since its anchoring, the MQA has reinforced quality training at all levels through the establishment of a regulatory framework. Moreover, the growing contribution of the MQA in strategic decisions for the boosting of our socio economic development is to be put on record.

It is also a pleasure to note the contribution of our international and local stakeholders who have been highly collaborative in the furtherance of the objects of the Authority. I am grateful for their continuous support in all our important activities.

The Board of the MQA is comprised of experienced professionals with a blend from public and private sectors. Members display their expertise in all deliberations for the benefit of MQA in the latter's quest for excellence. I have always ensured that all Board Members bear the hat of MQA during our discussions at Board meetings.

I would like to thank all the Board Members and the staff of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for their commitment and hard work. In a context of constant change and challenges, I wish the Authority all the best in the achievement of its vision by pursuing well defined goals and building upon the very best of practices.



R. S. Soomarooah
Chairman



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Message from Mr Kaylash Allgoo, Director



It is indeed with great pleasure that I am addressing this message on the occasion of the 40th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius and on the launching of this MQA Magazine.

In line with Government's pledge to provide our children with a world class quality education and training, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) is operationalising the National Qualifications Framework which is a very powerful tool in locating qualifications and in providing pathways to our learners, thereby ensuring quality at each and every stage. In this regard, National Qualifications with international benchmarks are being designed in various fields of the Mauritian economy. As a regulator, MQA is ensuring that every Mauritian acquires the necessary skills and knowledge for the development and betterment of the country.

In its endeavour towards World Class Quality Education and Training, the MQA is strengthening its collaboration with international organisations and Qualifications Authorities. The harmonization of qualifications is now becoming a reality. MQA has also launched a pilot project in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and this year will herald the implementation of the RPL at a national level.

With these words, I take this opportunity to thank all MQA staff for their committed and continuous collaboration.

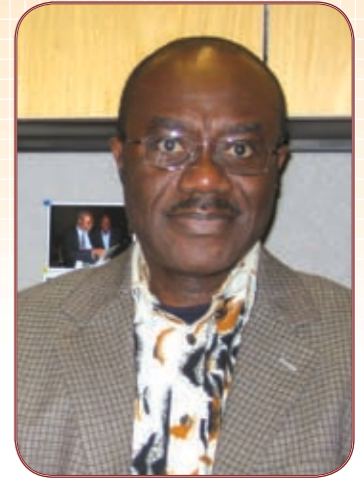
Kaylash Allgoo
Director

Goodwill Message from the TVET Team, Commonwealth of Learning

On the occasion of the 40th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius, I wish to congratulate the Government and People of Mauritius for the peace and progress the country has enjoyed in these past four decades.

I am particularly proud to have associated myself and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) to formulate a sound recognition of prior learning in technical, vocational education and training (TVET). Mauritius is also collaborating with COL to assist other Commonwealth African countries promoting adult literacy for lifelong learning and to facilitate the adaptation of a national qualifications framework in TVET.

The TVET team in Commonwealth Africa and colleagues at COL join in wishing Mauritius more years of success and stability. We will also continue to count on the good partnership between COL and MQA for the benefit of the continent of Africa.



Joshua C. Mallet
Commonwealth of Learning
Vancouver, Canada

Message from UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

On the occasion of the 40th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr Kaylash Allgoo, Director of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) and his team all success in realising the high aims that have been set in the programmes of MQA. On behalf of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Hamburg, I wish also to reiterate the importance of the strong cooperation between UIL and the Mauritius Qualifications Authority, especially in the areas of Recognition of Prior Learning, Adult Literacy for Lifelong Learning, Research, Capacity Building and International Cooperation. The MQA is contributing in a big way to a certified skilled workforce, an empowered population and to improving the position of Mauritius in the global village.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be associated with the publication of this Souvenir Magazine of the MQA and I fully commend the laudable efforts of the team behind this valuable publication. I am sure that this magazine will be a useful reference document to all stakeholders.



Madhu Singh
Senior Programme Specialist
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
Hamburg

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Preface

Linking Mauritius to the world economy is one of the greatest challenges the country is facing. At the very outset it is worthy to point out the tremendous and remarkable socio-economic upliftment of our society during the 40 years of Independence. Moving from a mono-crop based economy to a now more diverse and complex economic base, Mauritius is leading in the African and Indian Ocean region. Should growth be maintained, we cannot just rest on our laurels and lurk for opportunities.

Our strength is our people. It is time to reconcile training and education and continued effort be put to harmonise skilling strategies if we want to sustain a dynamic human base capable of coping with change. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) has already laid the foundation to enhance lifelong learning through the operationalisation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) consisting of 10 levels starting from CPE to Doctorate. The aim of the NQF is to gradually standardise qualifications and certification in Mauritius and it presents different pathways for progressing to the highest level.

As an initiative to mark the 40th Anniversary of our Independence, the MQA through this Souvenir Magazine brings forward new insights and thinking in the training sector. Special thanks go to all our local and international contributors for the elaboration of this publication. It is not out of place to mention here the speed with which this magazine has been prepared thanks to the MQA team. Last but not the least, we would like to place on record our deepest gratitude to all the sponsors who have promptly responded to our request for the publication of this magazine.

Finally, we wish to point out that the views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the different authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MQA.

Editing Team
 Mauritius Qualifications Authority



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The Setting up of MQA

As from 08 May 2002, the MQA became operational as a regulatory body in the field of training. It has the responsibility to develop, implement and maintain a National Qualifications Framework, to ensure compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation of Training institutions and to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable. From a historical perspective, this article provides the rationale for the setting up of the MQA.



K V Mooten
Administrative Manager, MQA

While we are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of our Independence, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority will be celebrating its 6th Anniversary, as it came into operation on 08 May 2002.

Why and how was the MQA set up?

It all started with the taking over of the regulatory functions of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) in May 2002. IVTB was the promoter, regulator and provider of training in Mauritius since 1988. It operated a number of training centres in the Technical and Vocational fields.

With the growing demand for Technical and Vocational courses, more training centres were being established in both public and private sectors. Those training institutions were offering wide range of Technical and Vocational courses in many different fields, at different levels, of varying duration and quality.

Great confusion, not to say chaos, prevailed in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training with the multitude of certificates and qualifications in existence.

Moreover, many training providers were issuing *Certificates of Attendance*, without clear and well defined outcomes of learning and training achieved.

More than twenty examining bodies were operating in Mauritius with different curricula and with different systems (French, Australian, British etc.). In addition, many Mauritian students were coming back with qualifications from different institutions world wide. It was very difficult to establish equivalences between qualifications issued by different bodies, thus making it harder for employers to value certificates issued by each body respectively.

There was no proper articulation between various courses and qualifications and no clear pathways between the awards of different providers, including the University of Mauritius. Many trainees were following expensive courses for qualifications which had no value. There was limited portability of qualifications and no national/international recognition of certificates.

The certification system did not recognise skills and knowledge acquired through experience and informal training. Lifelong learning was not recognised and there was practically no possibility for it.

Hence, there was an urgent need to establish a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework to rationalise the chaos that prevailed in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Mauritius and to bring together both Academic and Vocational Awards.

In the year 1997, there was a proposal to conduct a fundamental review of our vocational training system with the idea of having a framework of vocational qualifications.

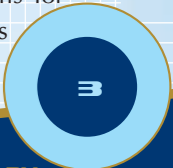
In 1998, the IVTB hired the services of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to investigate into the design and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Mauritius. A Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr A K Gujadhur (*then Chairman of IVT Council*) was set up for the implementation of the NQF.

Eventually in the year 2000, a Project Steering Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Mr Y Abdullatiff (*then Permanent Secretary of the former Ministry of Training, Skills Development and Productivity*) to work out on the NQF and drive it in line with international standards.

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001

Following the report of the Project Steering Committee, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Bill was prepared in 2001. The Bill 'to establish a Mauritius Qualifications Authority and to provide for matters connected therewith' was passed at the National Assembly on 20 December 2001.

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001 was published in the Government Gazette on 29 December 2001 (Act No. 42 of 2001). Subsequently, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001 was proclaimed on 08 February 2002 (Proclamation No. 7 of 2002). The Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001 provided for the establishment of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority as a body corporate administered and controlled by a Board. And it has three main objects which are (a) to develop, implement and maintain a National Qualifications Framework (b) to ensure compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation of training institutions and (c) to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable.



The Board of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority

The Board of the MQA was constituted on 15 March 2002. It first met on 26 March 2002 under the Chairmanship of Dr K M Soyjaudah, (then Associate Professor, University of Mauritius). The other members were Dr A Jeetun, Mr Y Abdullatiff, Mr S K Pather (replaced by Mrs V Ramsamy), Dr R S Lutchmeah, Mr R Dubois, and Mr G Nuckchady.

The operation of MQA

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority became operational as from 08 May 2002 with nine IVTB officers 'on secondment'. The MQA had leased 272 m² of office space at the IVTB House to start its activities.



Officers of IVTB who joined MQA at its inception

Dr K M S Soyjaudah (then Chairman, MQA) was also designated Officer in Charge as from 31 May 2002 till the appointment of the first Director, Mr P V Lutchmun on 28 January 2003. Out of the nine IVTB officers 'on secondment' at the MQA, one, namely Mr R K Phoolchund was appointed the Deputy Director & Registrar as from 01 April 2003 and the eight others namely Mr K V Mooten, Mr R Ramdass, Mr M Ramdawon, Mr A Balloo, Mrs N Putty, Ms C K Jankee, Mrs

P Bahadoor and Ms A Peeroo were permanently transferred as from 08 May 2003.

MQA at present

Currently, the MQA is leasing 472 m² of office space located in a separate building in the IVTB Compound to accommodate the Directorate and the three main functional Divisions, namely Corporate Services, Quality Assurance Services and Framework Services.

The MQA is presently headed by Mr K Allgoo as Director and has a staff of 31 officers. The actual Board of the MQA is chaired by Mr R S Soomarooah (General Manager, State Trading Corporation), Dr A Jeetun (Director, MEF), Mr S Ragen (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Human Resources), Mr R Dubois (Director, IVTB), Dr P Mohadeb (Ag. Executive Director, TEC), Mr M S A Pellegrin (Secretary-General, Insurers' Association of Mauritius-Independent Member) and Mr G Nuckchady (Director, AEA Training Centre-Representative of Registered Private Training Institutions).

The MQA is pursuing its role as regulator of training at the Technical and Vocational level while also consolidating the National Qualifications Framework, together with its associated Unit Standards and Qualifications. It has, as at date registered 385 Training Institutions, 4221 Trainers and has accredited 75 Training Institutions to run 984 accredited programmes.

MQA is also recognising and granting equivalence for Technical and Vocational qualifications, following the amendment made to its Act by the Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005 (Act No.18 of 2005 and Proclamation No 22 of 2005).

In view of recognising previous experience and competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems and to promote lifelong learning in Mauritius, the MQA is piloting a major project towards implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at national level. ■



MQA Management Team

Key Areas of Development at MQA

Among the various functions provided under legislation, the MQA as regulatory body for the technical and vocational training in Mauritius has set clear objectives in specific areas for development in line with the Government policy to make of Mauritius a knowledge hub. Management's vision of having "valued qualifications for employability and lifelong learning" has thus been translated into the mission "to continuously enhance good practices and relevant expertise to safeguard public interest in quality education and training." To this effect, key areas of development so far have been in the articulation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the setting up of quality assurance standards for improved compliance by training institutions, the establishment of linkages with international Qualifications Authorities, the recognition and equivalence of qualifications in the technical and vocational sector and of course the recognition and validation of prior learning acquired outside the formal education and training systems.



Jay Makoollall

Administrative Officer, MQA

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The growing reliance of the economy on human capital presupposes a trained population. In this respect, the operationalisation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) becomes imperative so as to equate the level of skills acquired by each and every citizen on the framework. It is undisputable that investment in skills and knowledge development whether by individuals, companies or Government is critical to national development. Learners and employers need a way to measure the skills and knowledge that their investments have achieved. **The NQF therefore not only helps learners to make informed decisions about the qualifications they need but also allows them to compare the levels of different qualifications and to identify clear progression routes from level 1 (CPE) to level 10 (PhD).**

The benefits of NQF are thus enormous. It goes from promoting flexible education and training pathways to the maintenance of international comparability of standards with the possibility of transferability and portability of qualifications and credits, integrating education and training at all levels including the world of work and providing parity of esteem for vocational education and training. The MQA is thus working in close collaboration with all stakeholders to firmly establish the NQF in Mauritius.

Registration/Accreditation and Quality Assurance Standards

Although new regulations regarding the registration of Training Institutions, Managers, Programme Officers, Trainers, Accreditation and Approval of Courses were in force since 2003, the criteria established by the MQA have been felt to be inadequate. The various modes of training have called for more rigorous quality assurance mechanisms and MQA as a regulator has had to orientate registered training institutions to put in place adequate systems and procedures for ensuring assessment of learners in a systematic and valid way. It was in this perspective that new quality assurance standards became applicable with effect from 01 July 2007. These standards have come to lay more emphasis on training delivery and as such compliance by registered training institutions is more oriented towards quality training.

Linkages with International Qualifications Authorities

At international level, MQA is seeking collaboration with other Qualifications Authorities and organisations abroad to form strategic alliances/partnerships in order to ensure comparability with international standards and harmonize qualifications.

The MQA has signed different Memoranda of Technical Cooperation and Partnership (MTCP) to adopt international best practices in the training system. The MTCPs signal an increased level of cooperation between Mauritius and those countries namely Namibia, Botswana and Seychelles, and the areas of common interest that are particularly addressed

are the alignment of the NQF and related activities and the setting and defining of standards for qualifications as well as the sharing and exchange with regard to key policies. The MTCP will also allow Mauritius and these countries to develop a common mechanism for evaluation of qualifications. The signing of the respective memorandum will not only help address, in the national interest of all these countries, the intertwined challenges of the knowledge economy and the training system but is also laying the foundation for the establishment of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) in the SADC region. It is worthy to mention here that other MTCPs and MoUs will be signed with other Qualifications Authorities and international institutions of repute shortly.

Recognition and Equivalence of Qualifications

With effect from July 2005, the MQA is carrying out the function of recognising qualifications which involves the evaluation and validation of qualifications in the TVET sector thereby giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to further higher education and/or employment activities.

The MQA also looks after equivalence of qualifications in the TVET sector whereby the Authority formally establishes two qualifications that are of comparable standard or level with a view to allowing access to educational and/or employment activities.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The MQA is mandated to validate and recognise competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems. RPL is arguably the most pressing issue around vocational education and training and it has been coming constantly on the forefront of the Government agenda as a means to combat the skills shortage problem in the country.

The concept of RPL is to translate prior learning and experience into a qualification, thereby allowing more people to acquire a duly recognised qualification. RPL is critical to the development of an open, accessible and integrated education and training system and is the foundation stone for lifelong learning policies which encourage individuals to participate in learning pathways including formal, non-formal and informal learning. RPL recognises learning regardless of how, when and where it was acquired, provided that the learning or competency results in a Unit Standard or Qualification.

It is with this endeavour that the MQA has embarked on the implementation of RPL on a pilot basis in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry and now the Authority is envisaging to have this project implemented across all sectors at national level. ■

The Evolution of TVET in Mauritius



Roland Dubois
Director, IVTB

“Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related science, the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life” (UNESCO).

The challenges facing the TVET system are therefore enormous. It has to:

- **train the pre-employed, the unemployed and those who are in employment,**
- **respond to the needs of the various industries and**
- **offer world class quality training in various fields and at different levels.**

Many Mauritians would be surprised to learn that TVET has a very long history in Mauritius, starting very timidly indeed in the early 1900s and gradually developing to what it is today. Needless to underline that it has gone through a difficult and hesitating pathway.

According to R Ramdoyal, sporadic attempts were made to introduce technical and agricultural instruction in the primary school syllabus, but the initial idea of education on purely ‘literary’ lines was so deeply rooted in the Mauritian mind that all attempts towards a practical bias met with an attitude which, if not frankly antagonistic, was characterized by indifference or passive resistance.

However, **TVET has been very closely associated with the economic development of Mauritius in one way or another**, most particularly with the creation of the Industrial Trade Training Centre (ITTC) in 1967, the School of Industrial Technology of the University of Mauritius in 1968 (now the Faculty of Engineering), the Lycee Polytechnique de Flacq in 1981, the IVTB in 1988 and the TSMTF in 1990.

This paper purports to give only a brief of the evolution of TVET in Mauritius. A deeper analysis and presentation would be needed to do justice to such a rich contributor.

Prior Initiatives

After many attempts, the Education Ordinance of 1899 made provision for the establishment of a system of instruction in technical, agricultural and commercial education*. Manual work was first introduced in 1905 in five primary schools. Twelve years later, in 1917, the first technical school was created with a view to initially give elementary instruction in woodwork to a certain number of boys selected from among the pupils of the primary schools in Port Louis and to those of them who made exceptionally good progress in a full course. They were then offered a training consisting of 50% of the time devoted to theory classes and 50% to practical work. Similar initiatives were undertaken in the agricultural sector with the creation of school gardens in the same year and a farm school some three years later but they did not last long.

A new scheme for the revision of the educational system placing a greater emphasis on vocational instruction had to be abandoned due to a disastrous cyclone and a financial depression in 1932. Even the technical school was closed. It was not before the 50s that the teaching of Arts and Crafts, Drawing, Painting, Modelling, Weaving, Needlecraft and Woodwork came to be gradually introduced in the curriculum of primary schools. However, greater progress was to be seen at the post primary level, where following the recommendation of one Mr Nichols in 1947, that a few Senior Schools (Central Schools) were established with either a commercial or technical or agricultural emphasis.

Evolution of TVET Post 60s

In 1963, a small Scale Industries Branch was set up first under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, and subsequently transferred under the Ministry of Education in 1964. Its objective was to design training programmes for the unemployed, underemployed and seasonally employed of the potential rural labour force for gainful employment. Five Vocational Centres were opened to teach dressmaking, embroidery, bakery, allied leather and general handicraft.

In addition, the John Kennedy College, together with some other State Secondary Schools, was offering a technical and vocational course alongside the academic streams.

The principal training centre offering training for craftsman level skills, the Industrial Trade Training Centre (ITTC) was set up in 1968 in Beau Bassin with UNDP financial assistance and the ILO as the executing agency. It offered training programmes leading to City and Guilds qualifications in machine shop, welding and metal fabrication, plumbing and pipe fitting, carpentry and joinery, as well as masonry and concrete.

The School of Industrial Technology, of the University of Mauritius which was set up in 1968 as a developmental university, initially started providing training of technicians with its Diploma in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and Civil Engineering (It also offered certificate courses in computer science and textile technology). It subsequently started training engineers who together with the technicians have contributed significantly in the first phase of the industrial development of Mauritius.

In 1970, the Sea Training School was established to provide training, both theoretical and practical, to seamen. It offered 15 weeks retraining course for those who had already been at sea and who had served on deck or in the engine room. The total number of trainees during the period 1980-83 was only 29.

In 1971, in order to support the tourism industry which was in its nascent state, the first Hotel and Catering Training School was created under the then Ministry of Economic Planning and Development with a view to train manpower for the hotel industry in Restaurant and Bar Service, Hotel Front Office (Reception), Kitchen Service (Assistant Chef), House Keeping and Hotel Management. As an indication, the output for the years 1979, 1981 and 1982 were of the order of 57, 54 and 86 respectively.



Ecole Hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval now providing a range of training programmes for the Hotel Industry

Evolution of TVET Post 80s

The 1980s saw a major evolution in the TVET arena. Due to a shortage of trained manpower, the Government of India, the Government of Mauritius and the World Bank set up as a joint project a second ITTC, which were to become the Prof Uppadyaya Training Centre in Piton. As mentioned in the Two Year Plan 1980-82, it was estimated that during that period, some 28,000 young persons were to seek employment for the first time, besides a substantial number of existing school leavers with no previous work experience. The major objective of the 1980-82 Plan then was to upgrade the skills of persons already in employment and also to meet the requirements of new job seekers through institutional or in-plant training and vocational guidance. This plan also set the scene for a Central Training Office (CTO) to control and coordinate all vocational trainings available in Mauritius and promote its development through the provision of guidance and assistance.

In 1982, the Lycee Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget was set up at Centre de Flacq in line with the government policy to extend technical and vocational education and training facilities. The Lycee was to admit post Form III students for two types of courses, namely

- (a) 4-year course for Technicians; and
- (b) 3-year course for Craftsmen, in Automechanics, Maintenance and Production Mechanics, Electronics and Building Construction.

In 1983, enrolment was 207 (craftsmen) and 6 (technicians).

The CTO was finally enacted in 1984 with the following objectives:-

- (a) to advise the Minister on matters relating to vocational and technical training;
- (b) to monitor the needs for occupational training in consultation with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, the Ministry for Employment and Social Security and National Solidarity, the Ministry for women’s Rights and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
- (c) to administer, control and operate training schemes; and
- (d) to provide for, promote, assist in and regulate the training or apprenticeship of persons who are or will be employed in commercial, technical and vocational fields.

Responsibility for the CTO shuttled between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment until the Government decided to shelve it. Instead, a Manpower Planning and Training Division was set up within the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in 1985 to act as the focal point for all matters relating to training.

With the manufacturing boom, the economic development of the country picked up in the late 1980s and it became accepted that the improvement of manpower quality and in sufficient numbers would be the key element in the Manpower Policy of the Government for the period 1988-90. Given the high demand for trained labour, private training institutions started to mushroom resulting into a plethora of uncoordinated training activities with no guarantee of the quality of the training. It seems that the CTO was not delivering as per expectations.

Setting up of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB)

The setting up of the IVTB marked an important milestone in the evolution of TVET in Mauritius. It was set up in 1988 to replace the CTO with more or less the same objectives of the CTO. However, employers’ organizations and other private sector representatives figured prominently on the Council of the IVTB compared with that of the CTO.

It was clearly mentioned in the National Development Plan 1988-90 that the IVTB 'will not therefore be a heavy handed monolithic organisation which will crowd out others from the national training effort or stifle private initiative but rather ensure that all these efforts complement one another as part of a coherent strategy to meet industrial training needs, at least cost'. The IVTB then became operational in January 1989 with numerous challenges, such as the need to ensure quality of training dispensed by the private training centres, resolve the equivalence and validity of certificates being issued and ensure access to a greater people to be trained, etc.



IVTB House at Pont Fer, Phoenix

In order to resolve the issue of certification of training courses, it was first proposed to issue a National Certificate of Proficiency for all courses organized under the aegis of the IVTB so that they are properly accredited and recognized by employers. It was meant to correct the disorder prevailing at the time with different training institutions dishing out certificates with no specific equivalence.

The National Trade Certification System (NTC) was gazetted as GN 1254 of 1993 which made the IVTB 'responsible, inter alia, for administration, control and operation of training programmes and for implementation of the National Trade Certification System (NTC)'. Hence, any person who wished to obtain NTC qualifications, had to apply for registration to the IVTB on the prescribed application form. The NTC examinations were to be conducted jointly by IVTB and Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. Accordingly, the NTC would be awarded to only those candidates who would have successfully completed all the examination components.

Evolution of TVET after the setting up of the IVTB

The main role of IVTB, a joint partnership of the public and private sectors, was to regulate, facilitate and provide training. Immediately, regulations were developed to ensure quality and relevance of training provided by private training providers; various training schemes were put in place to encourage employers to invest in the training and development of their employees in order to upgrade their skills and enhance productivity. In parallel, the IVTB started offering training in a few basic trades

identified by the industry. It expanded further its training breadth with time and as the needs arose in other trades. Inevitably, as the IVTB grew and as the labour market also changed, it had to review its strategy. The training schemes had to be revisited a few times in order to make it more responsive to the demands of the industry and more strategic in its objectives.

Training provided by the IVTB evolved over time, both in terms of fields and levels. With a view to bringing public training institutions under the control and administration of one central body, some training centres, previously operating under various ministries, such as the ITTC at Beau Bassin and Piton, the Hotel and Catering Training School in Curepipe, the two Vo-Tech Centres in Footwear and Leathercraft (no longer in operation) and Textile/Fashion (Bell Village) were transferred to the IVTB.

The setting up of training centres to cater for training in new fields like Electronics, Jewellery, Printing, Precision Engineering, etc. was largely influenced by the Government's policy in the early 1990s, the main thrust of which was the diversification of the industrial base.

Initially the training provided was up to the National Trade Certificate (NTC) Level 3. But as time progressed, new and higher level courses up to the Higher National Diploma were introduced in Hospitality Management and Tourism, Fashion and Textile Design, Automation, Telecommunications, Industrial Machine Maintenance and Information Technology amongst others, in order to respond to the need to keep pace with new technologies adopted and/or rapid development in the industries concerned.

In order to make TVET delivery more efficient and effective, the Apprenticeship Mode of training where every trainee would spend 4 to 5 days weekly in a company and one day in the IVTB training centres was introduced with 12 apprenticeable trades in 1976. Today the apprenticeable trades are 43 and will further be expanded to 65 in the very near future.



Students following Engineering course at an IVTB Training Centre

Setting up of the MQA

With the growing number of private training centres, IVTB was being seen more and more in a conflicting situation of a regulator and provider of training. Coupled with this was the fact that the different types of qualifications being issued by the private training institutions were creating confusion at the level of the end users. Hence the Mauritius Qualifications Authority was set up in May 2002 and took over the regulatory function for training. It was attributed other roles such as the development of a National Qualifications Framework, which would integrate academic and vocational awards and provide links between formal education and training. By that time IVTB had registered some 208 training institutions and 2049 trainers.

Setting up of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)

In line with the restructuring of the TVET starting earlier, the HRDC was established in November 2003 with the following objectives:-

- promote human resource development in line with national economic and social objectives;
- stimulate a culture of training and lifelong learning at the individual, organisational and national levels for employability and increasing productivity; and
- provide the necessary human resource thrust for successful transformation of the economy of the country into a Knowledge Economy.

The management of the training levy/grant scheme which had been instituted by the IVTB since 1989 to provide for fiscal and financial incentives to private employers in order to catalyse their investing into the training and retraining of their employees was transferred to the HRDC.

The IVTB as an enhanced TVET provider

The IVTB became an enhanced provider of training. Today through its 11 training centres, they offer training at the basic level in 28 trades ranging from agriculture to wood trade; training at the intermediary level in 16 trades ranging from communication electronics to tourism and training at the Diploma level in 10 trades spreading from graphics design and multimedia to Clothing production.



Training in Clothing Production

Conclusion

To conclude, let me quote the President of IVETA (2005/2006) who said it all in his closing remarks of the 15th IVETA International Conference held in Moscow from 21st to 23rd August 2006. He said that "after a period of marginalisation (from around 1980 to 1996), the importance of TVET has once again become apparent in the world, especially since both globalisation and technology have become significant drivers of education reform."

The World Bank also paid tribute to TVET in one of its report. It stated that '80% of the jobs in the whole world necessitate TVET competencies and the figure is still higher in developing countries.'

Yet, in Mauritius there is still a stigma attached to TVET. It is still perceived by a large majority of the population as being restricted to CPE failures. It is paradoxical to recognise that human assets are the prime movers of the competitiveness of an enterprise and yet expecting these human resources to be those who have failed in the mainstream. However, it has to be emphasised that slowly TVET is being accepted by the Mauritian Society at large as an alternative route to success. ■

Source:-

- 1.0 National Development Plan, 1988-90
- 2.0 Central Training Office Act, 1984
- 3.0 White Paper on Education June, 1984
- 4.0 Mauritius Economic Review, 1981-83
- 5.0 Mauritius Two Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, 1980-82
- 6.0 Mauritius 5 Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, 1975-1980
- 7.0 Annual Report on Education, 1965
- 8.0 R Ramdoyal: The Development of Education in Mauritius, 1710 - 1976.

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The Case for Reform in the TVET Sector

The growing importance of vocational education and training for the development of a skilled workforce is recognized in all countries. Third wave economies which have already embraced the Knowledge-Economy have implemented clearly established pathways between their education and training systems to allow their workforce to grow professionally throughout their lives. This has been and is a major determinant in the creation of an intelligent workforce which is not only competitive globally but is also capable of shaping and reshaping work processes to transform organizations into knowledge organizations.



S Ragen
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education & HR

In fact, it is estimated that more than 50% of GDP in the major OECD economies is now knowledge-based. World correlation exists to show that countries that have succeeded economically are those that have invested massively in their human resources. **Globalisation warrants that for a nation to be productive and competitive and thrive on the world market, its people should have world standards competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes).**

In countries of the region of course, given the shortage of skilled manpower, TVET assumes an even more prominent place on the economic and social development agenda. The case of Mauritius is in a way singular by the fact that we have no abundance of natural resources and our human resource is the main resource around which our development has been shaped. In addition, during the forthcoming decade our economic model will require more and more empowering people in playing a dynamic role in the economy. This calls for a paradigm shift in the way we view and develop our human resources. In the past, we invested heavily in infrastructure to build industries, create jobs and generate wealth. Today, we must invest in people to boost their skills, knowledge and creativity. People, their ideas and capabilities, are the key source of wealth and opportunities.

According to UNESCO (Education Today, April-June 2005), TVET has fuelled phenomenal economic growth in some countries and fallen short of expectations in others. Globalisation is also prompting governments to take renewed interest in this branch, still perceived as second-class.

There is an undisputed need to train, retrain and re-retrain our people who are the utmost asset we possess in Mauritius. We need human resource that can be responsive to the needs of tomorrow's industry, that is, human resources that can perform the job of today effectively and efficiently, but also who are flexible and can learn quickly and use any new technology that is continuously being placed on the market. In other words, we need to have a strong pool of people who are technology conversant and competent, good team player, able to learn independently and be up to date with the latest development in their areas of specialisation. TVET has been an instrument to overcome social exclusion resulting from high repetition and drop out rate among basic and secondary students. TVET has also played a role as part of active labour market policies designed to combat

unemployment and more recently, for the re-training of workers affected by economic restructuring. It has also been an important instrument of development policy, aimed at attracting direct investment (foreign and local) in emerging sectors.

In the wake of globalisation and the development of a knowledge-based society, oriented primarily towards the service sector, the TVET sector is facing serious challenges which call for reforms at different levels, aimed at improving governance, financing, quality and relevance, role of the private sector, and the acquisition of skills in a non-formal or informal environment.

The vision of the present Government, as expressed in its Government Programme 2005/2010, is to ensure that Mauritius develops a World Class Quality Human Resources through a World Class Quality Education and Training.

A strategy paper has recently been prepared to review our TVET system to ensure optimal use of our resources. Emphasis will be more and more on the dynamic aspect of the National HRD Plan which will guide policy makers on the orientation and reorientation of the TVET system. For the plan to be truly useful to policy makers it will be subject to annual review in the light of new trends in technologies and socio-economic policies in place. This would avoid oversupplying or undersupplying the labour market with technical and vocational skills. The plan will also indicate what strategies should be put in place to reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of human resources. Here the role of public and private training partners will be clearly defined to ensure optimal use of training resources taking into account the increasing number of foreign affiliated institutions which are penetrating the training market.

The present training structure will be integrated under one roof where all TVET institutions will operate under one umbrella with clear definition of roles to eliminate duplication of training resources and harmonise the delivery of TVET qualifications with established pathways.



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Training clusters in growth sectors (IFETs) will be set up to provide the labour market with the required quality and quantity of skills. Those clusters will have to benchmark with international models of excellence to operate at world class level hence create talents which are recognized world wide. This strategic orientation of our training delivery system will support the Government's policy to transform Mauritius into a knowledge hub.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will become fully operational and will be used as a tool for TVET reform. The concept of Qualifications Framework is now a global phenomenon and is increasingly resorted to as an instrument to produce a highly skilled and knowledgeable community, a wealthy and sustainable nation, and an economy which is vigorous and internationally competitive, while at the same time addressing issues such as poverty and unemployment. The NQF consists of 10 levels of hierarchy, ranging from Certificate of Primary Education at level 1 to Doctorate at level 10.

The NQF serves to facilitate articulations and emphasizes learning and qualifications pathways. As such, the concept of lifelong learning will be favoured since learners will know well in advanced how they can progress on the NQF.

The mechanism for Recognition of Prior Learning will be made operational to validate competences acquired on the job by workers and facilitate mobility between the education and training systems. This mobility within the TVET system is essential to allow the workforce to continually upgrade their existing skills, acquire new skills and develop multiskills.

The Chambre des Métiers Bill will soon be passed and will be a major breakthrough in professionalising and regulating all trades. Tradesmen represent a critical mass in emerging economies and have a critical role to play in dynamising the economy. Giving them the opportunity to register, obtain recognition for their skills and further upgrade their skills will therefore allow them either to set up their own business in a professional manner, create small clusters to service big companies in a more effective way or really add value as a tradesman employed in a public or private company. The outsourcing business can be a great opportunity here for them to tap.

Reforms in education generally takes a long time to yield visible results. However, this should not be an excuse for postponing the reform process as the status quo inevitably breeds complacency and degradation. ■

The Training Landscape in Mauritius

Training is beneficial to both the organisation and individual and it is of no use if it does not meet the needs of the organisation and the individual. However, Training is given at different levels viz:

- Individual :** Each person has his/her own training needs according to experience / qualifications.
- Organisational:** Often the whole organisation needs training as a result of a major change.
- Group :** At times many employees of a particular class, grade or organisation may have similar needs.

The underlying philosophy of training is to:-

- Equip newly recruited employees with the necessary knowledge and skills in the execution of their job.
- Improve work performance of serving employees.
- Update knowledge and skills of employees in accordance with the current trends.
- Provide serving employees with international exposure in their respective disciplines.

Furthermore, it is argued that competent employees will not remain competent continuously, their skills can become obsolete with the changes in the working environment ; hence the need for refresher course.

Strategy for Training

A systematic approach to training includes:-

- Training needs assessment
- Design of training
- Delivery of training
- Evaluation of Training
- Review of design and delivery of the training course subsequent to feedback received on the training programme.

A training needs assessment is conducted to identify needs in terms of causes, level of hierarchy, degree of urgency with which they need to be addressed and coordination of training throughout the whole organisation.

The design of training programme should meet the needs of the individual and ensure that the training objectives are in line with the mission and vision of the organisation. Training has two components namely teaching and learning. To be effective, the training programme must be well designed and delivered so that learning is facilitated and it should also be related to the job. Moreover, the training imparted should result in the achievement of the purpose for which the programme was designed.

The delivery of training includes training of trainers; the training institutions should be staffed by qualified and experienced people; have the necessary infrastructure such as multimedia, space and an environment conducive to participation. The learner must be encouraged to ask questions. It is argued that unless the trainee is involved in the process of training he/she does not learn much.



Dr N Luckheerain
PAS, Ministry of Education & HR

Evaluation of training

Training should be followed by the dissemination of information regarding the overall purpose of training and followed by an evaluation based on systematic feedback.

Impact of Training

Effective training programmes at macro level would bring the following results:-

- ❑ Decrease unemployment;
- ❑ Reduce social problems/instability such as juvenile delinquency, drug/alcohol addiction;
- ❑ Higher individual performance and higher financial performance (profits) of organisation;
- ❑ Making judicious use of resources, better throughput time;
- ❑ Increase in Gross Domestic Product and Gross National Product;
- ❑ A higher standard of living for the citizens and reduce poverty.

However, for training to be successful, senior management must consider it as an investment, otherwise, training becomes sporadic, perfunctory and is used as a fashionable concept for want of senior management commitment.

Despite being in a strategic position and the various fiscal incentives provided by the Government of Mauritius to attract foreign investors, the competitive advantage of Mauritius would be lost and these incentives will be of little use if the private sector is not backed up by an effective public service.



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Mauritius is embarking on another stage of its development whereby Tourism and Information Communication Technology are becoming other important pillars of its economy.

To translate this dream of becoming highly valued and demanded destination and a cyber island into reality, it is imperative that its most important and valued asset be turned into highly skilled workforce as the source of its success will depend on its human resources. The lack of commercially exploitable resources reinforces the need to have a highly skilled workforce.

To meet the demand for training in the various fields, Mauritius has witnessed a mushrooming of training institutions. However, the MQA is leaving no stone unturned to make these institutions comply with its regulations and bring them to operate within the parameters set by the MQA to promote Mauritius as a knowledge hub and provide a World Class Quality Education and Training as per the vision of the Government. The MQA has taken a number of strategic decision such as the development of National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Quality Assurance (QA) and international collaboration with other countries.

At the level of the Civil Service, the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms has been vested with the responsibility of training of Civil Servants.

Training of Civil Servants has up to now been conducted at different levels of the hierarchy by way of:-

- (i) In-house training (Induction/Foundation and Refresher Courses)
- (ii) Sponsorship; and
- (ii) Scholarships under Bilateral and Technical Assistance Schemes.

In-house Training

In-house courses are mainly in the form of induction/foundation courses which are geared to help officers learn on the job and to acquaint themselves with the working environment. These courses are mostly designed for officers of the General Services Class who have joined the service and for those who have been promoted.

Sectoral Training Courses

Sectoral Training Courses are run by each Ministry to cater for sectoral training needs of technical officers, e.g MIE for Ministry of Education & H.R., Mauritius Institute of Health for officers of Ministry of Health, etc.

Sponsorship

Civil Servants are either sponsored or given all facilities to enable them to follow award courses in priority fields of study to upgrade their qualifications.

Scholarships

Courses are available under Bilateral and Technical Assistance Schemes to provide Public Officers with international exposure to seminars, conferences and workshops.

Refresher Courses

Refresher courses are also held for officers to upgrade their knowledge, skills and attitudes as it has been found by researchers that the training effects are lost after six to twelve months. ■



Training Programme on Good Corporate Governance for MQA

Rethinking of the TVET – Policy Implications

Our vision is that people of Mauritius should have the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to fulfil themselves, to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a competitive global economy. To realize this vision, we need a world-class system of education and training. This article makes the case for a transformational approach to rethink on the right mix of policies to lead Mauritius as a confident, outward-looking society and a leading-edge economy playing its full part in the world.

Mauritius needs highly skilled, productive workers to compete even more successfully in the global market. New training strategies have to be formulated so as to address in an effective manner any dearth of skilled labour. There are still critical needs in occupations ranging from computer related services to financial and hotel services. The careers forged in these types of occupation and industries have traditionally been viewed as 'second class' to careers obtained through university study. However, people are progressively realizing that a vocational qualification can lead to a challenging, diverse, independent and indeed for many, a very lucrative career. Moreover, as per the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), in the context of trade liberalization, the mode 4 operation allows for movement of natural persons across countries, thus creating other opportunities for exporting of manpower. Our goal is to ensure that the future Mauritian training system will be even more responsive to the ever changing needs of industries and ensure greater access and success.

As per the ILO HRD Recommendation 195 of 2004, it is recognized that 'Education, training and lifelong learning are fundamental and should be consistent with comprehensive, economic, fiscal, social and labour market policies and programmes that are important for sustainable economic growth, employment creation and social development. **Thus, all reform strategies must be integrative and relevant to existing policy framework for education and training to meet and enhance the country's skills and competence needs.**

The growing internationalization of economies affects the world of work with rapid and frequent changes and the introduction of new technologies. Thus, a well motivated labour force possessing the required mental and physical skills for a modern economy is the most valuable economic asset. While the cultural background and progress of education in Mauritius has provided the basis for an intelligent and adaptable labour force, there is a need to create the skills required to meet the demand generated by prospective economic development. This would require **a change in the quality and content of education from its present generally academic emphasis to more technical and vocational orientations at all levels.**

It is imperative that a paradigmatic shift from viewing TVET as an inferior segment of the overall educational system to

that of first choice career path be made. Therefore, this vision should be shared among all to drive the reform of the TVET sector. Together, **we should aim to a system which is failure-free and strength-based. Our only resource is human capital and everyone is a potential resource which needs to be tapped.**

Moreover, new ways of learning and training should be developed so as to be in line with the development of a knowledge-based economy. The concept of learning, unlearning and relearning should be reinforced at all levels to minimize structural unemployment through appropriate retraining and reskilling programmes. The challenge for TVET should be to allow retrenched workers to obtain credits for skill acquired on the job and move up the training ladder to acquire new skills for jobs available in growth sectors or for emerging new sectors.

In a nutshell, the TVET should transcend and integrate the whole educational and training system. **Outcome based learning should be emphasized to ensure greater relevancy.** Alignment of the TVET reform to the National Qualifications Framework would allow for improved articulation of qualifications to be introduced in between TVET and with academic qualifications offered locally. This would also ensure parity of esteem for the TVET.

The growing expectations of learners, especially among young Mauritians and the need for life-long learning, present new challenges to trainers. Providers and institutions must continue to innovate and adopt new technologies and practices to reach out to existing and new learners. With individuals increasingly taking responsibility for their own workplace learning, there is pressure on the system to deliver new forms of training.

Growth in non-standard employment, frequent and multiple career change and different forms of work organization, mean that skills can no longer be defined solely in terms of traditional occupations and career structures. Training in the 21st century must address all these issues to deliver a skilled workforce for the future and to meet social expectations. ■



R Ramchurun
Programme Officer, MQA

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Human Capital in Mauritius

Human capital is a fundamental element in all development equation. If Mauritius is to maintain a competitive advantage in the global economy, it has to sustain the development of a highly skilled manpower. However, there are challenges which need to be addressed at policy and implementation level.

People first! People make things happen. Since 1968, despite the absence of natural resources, Mauritius has progressed in many directions technologically, economically, and industrially. The initial growth in Mauritius was led by the Sugar sector, which accounted for about 20 percent of GDP in early 1970s. Pairs of hands were sufficient to ensure the success of the Sugar and Manufacturing industries. Over the decades, the economy has undergone major structural changes and diversified into other pillars like Manufacturing, Agriculture, Financial Services, Tourism and most recently, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Seafood Hub, and the Knowledge Hub. Success in these emerging sectors can only be achieved if we have more and more thinking hands. The famous economist Shultz observed that "the most distinctive feature of our economic system was the growth in human capital; without it there would be only hard, manual work and poverty except for those who had income from poverty".

Our country has become richer in terms of human capabilities and quality of living. Mauritian live longer, they are better informed, and they can communicate better. If skills were once a key driver of prosperity and fairness, they are now the main driver. While several countries are struggling to provide basic education to their citizens, every child is guaranteed a seat in our schools where s/he can benefit from free education. In return, the educated population has played a pivotal role in transforming the country into a vibrant one.

As of 1st July 2007, the population of the Republic of Mauritius was estimated at 1,260,696. There were 623,118 males and 637,578 females. For the third quarter of 2007, the labour force was 552,600. The number of employed persons was estimated at 507,500, and the number of unemployed at 45 100. The unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2007 was estimated at 8.2%, lower than the rate of 9.0% at the previous quarter and 9.5% at the third quarter of 2006.

The challenge today is to sustain the development of our human resources if Mauritius is to maintain a competitive advantage in this hyper competitive economy. Mauritius needs more competent workers as we move further into the era of globalisation, technological development and knowledge society that are hastening the pace of economic and social changes. Human capital is not only a key determinant of economic growth but it is also associated with a wide range of non-economic benefits such as better health and well-being. It is now accepted that economic growth, employment levels and the availability of a skilled workforce are inter related: economic growth creates employment, but economic growth partly depends on skilled human resources – a country's human capital. Sustained economic growth is at the basis of every society where prosperity is not limited to the few, but is shared - and indeed created - by the many, and where every child gets the right start in life.

In his best seller, "The World Is Flat", Thomas Friedman attributes the need for higher order skills in the workplace to the fact that "...technology will be churning old jobs and spawning new, more complex ones much faster than during the transition from the agricultural economy to the industrial one." With such rapid changes in the workplace, the key concern today is employability.



Dr K S Sukon
Manager Research, HRDC

The learning curve of competencies needed to remain employable is becoming steeper as the time available for learning becomes shorter. Continuous labour market changes have the greatest impact on those entering the labour market for the first time. To respond to employment instability and growing demands for performance at work, human resource development systems must now prepare learners not only for their first full-time jobs, but also for continued learning and career transitions throughout their working lives.

In the dynamic global economy, people's economic security is most unlikely to depend on trying to protect particular jobs, holding back the tide of change. The traditional model of protecting people from change cannot be pursued. Employment experts advocate that the best form of welfare will be to ensure people can find their next job, staying in the labour market. One of the ways to achieve this is to ensure that Mauritians have the required set of skills that allows flexibility and can update their skills as the economy changes. The mobility in the modern labour market would be possible if employees are able to update their skills to adapt to change.

Investment in human capital, and by implication in education and training, has moved to a centre stage in strategies to promote economic prosperity, fuller employment and social cohesion. As a result, education and training are increasingly considered as investment in the collective future of societies and nations, rather than simply in the future success of individuals. The investment on education has been significant in Mauritius. Total government expenditure estimates for the financial year 2007/2008 is Rs 61,544 million, out of which, Rs 7 812 million (13%) has been allocated to education. Government capital expenditure on education, estimated at Rs 872 million, represents 9% of total government capital expenditure (Rs 10,050 million), and recurrent expenditure on education is estimated at Rs 6 940 million, that is 13% of the government total recurrent expenditure (Rs 51,494 million).

Moreover, in 2006/2007, around Rs 180 million has been awarded as training grant through the National Training Fund.

Although, the return on investment on education and training cannot always be calculated explicitly, it reflects in the number of learners passing each cycle successfully. Presently, around 75% of a cohort completes the CPE examinations successfully every year after their first or second attempt. 55% of the cohort successfully completes the School Certificate but only around 35% access the Upper Secondary. The pre-vocational route does not seem to be successful. If, on average, three out of every four students who complete pre-vocational education join the NTC Foundation course, 70% of them complete it. Out of them, only around 10% join the NTC3 course. Broadly, the pre-vocational education is preparing only one out of every ten students to join the vocational course.

This sharp pyramidal structure of the number of children participating at various stages of the education system indicates the inherent level of wastage and the serious difficulties faced by our children to progress through the existing educational set up. For several years the education system has been forcing extremely large number of children to leave before completing a cycle of studies. Despite the tremendous efforts made since the 1970's, the inherited education backlog has not yet been adequately redressed and improved in qualitative terms. Thus the present educational reform, which focuses on quality education and training, comes at the most appropriate time.

Although, unemployment rate is decreasing, the number of people without a job is still high. In response to human resource development challenges, and in an effort to build a cohesive national identity, diversify the economy, fight poverty and develop democracy, the Government has embarked on various projects including the Educational Reforms, the Empowerment Programme, IC3 Programme and the National Human Resource Development Plan.

However, we need to realise that Mauritius does not have all the necessary modern training facilities. It would be recommended to adopt the Singaporean strategy to

enter into partnership with various large multinational companies which have the expertise to conduct specialised training programmes in their own sphere of activities. For instance in the BPO sector, arrangements should be made with leading companies like Sun, Cisco, Oracle and Microsoft to train and re-train our local experts and trainers regularly. Industry-based training programmes for small and medium organisations must be encouraged. Similar to IC3 programme, we should help a substantial number of workers who lack the basic numerical ability and knowledge of English/French, by promoting programmes such as the Singaporean Basic Education and Skill Training (BEST) programmes where the main focus was on basic Mathematics and the English language. Once the employees have undergone such programmes they can be put through an advanced programme.

It is worth noting that productivity is increasingly driven by skills. One of the important factors that determines the success of companies, in the face of growing international competition, is the availability of the skilled labour force they can draw from. Workers, who have been fully empowered, are better able to adapt to new technologies and market opportunities. Highly skilled labour force drives innovation, facilitates investment and improves leadership and management. In areas of scarcity of labour, highly skilled foreign employees should be encouraged to join the local industries.

The links between skills and wider social outcomes, such as health, crime and social cohesion cannot be ignored. Skills have important impacts on financial capability, helping households to manage the family finances and family life, enabling parents to help their children with their homework. Achieving world class skills is the key to achieving economic success and social justice in the new global economy. World class skills are inexorably tied to world class employment. The process of skill development and upgrading of human resources to meet the expanding requirements of the industry must be taken up with resolve and renewed energy if we want everyone in Mauritius to make the most of their opportunities and talents. Too much is at stake for anything else! ■



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*MQA Staff
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A Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) For SADC

States in the Southern African region are gradually coming together as a regional economic block with the emergence of the SADC Community. Mobility of people across the borders is becoming increasingly important and a skilled manpower is required for sustained development. In this context, the SADC Education and Training protocol aims to progressively achieve equivalence, harmonization and standardisation of the education and training systems in the region. This has led to the need for Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) which will facilitate the process. The basic principles of the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework are centred around regional cooperation and solidarity, empowerment of national systems, enhancement of quality, relevance and pragmatism. Some countries have already embarked on their National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and inherently quality assurance issues are also being looked into along the process. Both will pave the way for the emergence of the RQF.



Robin Phoolchund
Deputy Director & Registrar,
MQA

Globalization in education has led to a marked increase in the mobility of people, programmes and institutions across national borders. Consequently, the portability of qualifications is becoming an issue of concern to all countries by posing quality assurance and recognition of qualifications challenges.

In order to address such challenges facing education and training, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which consists of 14 member states: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, agreed to cooperate through the SADC Protocol on Education and Training which entered into force in 2000 with the aim of harmonizing the education and training systems in the region. This includes harmonization of qualifications, accreditation and certification systems.

A Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification (TCCA) was set up to facilitate the implementation of this aspect of the Protocol. The issue of portability and mobility of qualifications was addressed with the proposed establishment of an RQF. In this regard a concept paper has been developed in 2005 paving the way for the setting up of the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF).

The vision of the SADCQF is to be a regional qualifications framework that is a driving force for regional integration, quality assurance and global competitiveness of education and training systems in SADC Member States.

Its purpose is to provide a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications, credits transfers within and among Member States and even beyond, and to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member States, harmonise qualifications wherever possible, and create regional standards where appropriate.

The SADCQF will also contribute to the development and implementation of NQFs in member states, harmonisation between the respective NQFs and reviewing/strengthening national assessment and accreditation systems. It will also facilitate agreement on entrance requirements to higher education and training.

The scope of SADCQF will cover all forms, levels and categories of education and training that exist in the Region and in Member States and will include provision by public and private sectors and NGOs. The main principle will be one of inclusiveness to encompass all areas of general education, vocational education and training, higher education, lifelong and out-of-school or non-formal education, including various modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance and on-line. Apprenticeships and industry-based training will also be taken on board. Cross-border education and training as outlined under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) will not be excluded.

List of Member States Forming Part of the SADC

- Angola
- Botswana
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Some of the basic principles upon which the SADCQF should be based have been proposed as follows:

- Regional solidarity and cooperation
- Interaction with global and local frames of reference
- Empowerment of national education and training systems
- Quality enhancement and empowerment of education and training in the region
- Respect for regional and multilateral decisions
- Autonomy and inter-relatedness of the sectors of learning
- Pragmatism in development
- Relation to national education systems
- Equity within and among Member States
- "Home-grown" within the region

It is to be noted that within the region, Member States have already initiated action for establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks. Countries with existing qualifications- and/or training authorities include:

- Mauritius (MQA)
- South Africa (SAQA)
- Botswana (BOTA)
- Malawi (TEVETA)
- Zambia (TEVETA)
- Namibia (NQA)
- Tanzania (TEVETA)

Countries presently considering National Qualifications Authorities include:

- Lesotho (LQA)
- Zimbabwe (ZIMQA)

Inherent in the development of national and regional qualifications framework is the need to address quality assurance at levels of the education and training systems. In this regard, a study of quality assurance systems across the region was conducted in 2007.

The report from the study indicated clearly that significant progress has been made with the development of quality assurance systems across all Member States, and that these developments can be supported in the following areas, namely by establishing:

1. Improved comparability of quality assurance systems in SADC Member States through the development of regional guidelines for quality assurance
2. Common mechanisms for the evaluation of qualifications through the development of guidelines and training
3. Alignment of quality assurance development with regional, African and international developments through increased involvement in such processes, particularly the Arusha Convention
4. Support to Member States to develop NQFs by identifying and contracting key experts within the region
5. Human resource development, specifically through the development and delivery of a SADC training course on quality assurance
5. Establishment of a regional qualifications framework, including a regional database and a small and nimble coordinating agency that can oversee regional quality assurance processes, such as the accreditation of regional providers and registration of regional qualifications

Work is currently under way along those lines. It is expected that the RQF which will gradually emerge as the respective NQFs of the different Member States will become operational. However, it is to be noted that the SADCQF cannot be designed in isolation from the activities in Africa and the world at large. It will indeed be important to also keep track of development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and those of other regions going through the same process of establishing regional qualifications frameworks. Eventually the linkages would have to be forged with such metaframeworks across the globe. ■



Group discussion on RQF concept paper

The National Qualifications Framework Explained

Many countries have developed their qualifications framework with a view to rationalise their qualifications systems. Mauritius is of no exception. The MQA has set up the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which is a powerful tool to rationalise qualifications, to provide clear pathways and to allow for mutual recognition of qualifications. The NQF has been rendered dynamic through the development of Unit Standards and Qualifications which is the heart of the system. The underlying principles of the Recognition of Prior Learning lie on the NQF together with its associated Unit Standards and Qualifications. The NQF is now on the move.

There is growing, emerging literature on NQF around the world indicating that the National Qualifications Framework movement has become a worldwide trend. NQF's have been, or are being implemented in all four corners of the globe, in developed countries, as well as in developing countries. It is often argued that the NQF can be used:

- (a) To improve the understanding of an education and training system within a country and in making progression routes and access to different parts of the national system more explicit.
- (b) To meet the needs of government to make education and training more accountable by bringing all of the systems in line with national policy
- (c) To provide for comparability across borders, particularly in regions where there is much mobility of students and workers.

A Qualification Framework is just one feature of a qualification or certification system although it is often a clear and prominent statement of the way qualifications systems interface with learners, providers and employers. Our National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is made of 10 levels and it ranges from the certificate of primary education to a Doctorate. Each level is defined by level descriptors which aim at describing the expected outcomes, learning demands and enable learners to carry out processes.

It is thus an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. The NQF is classified into 3 segments whereby the first segment comprises qualifications in the primary/secondary education at level 1 to 5 but with specific qualifications as awarded at level 1, 3 and 5 (e.g. CPE, SC, HSC, Bacalaureate) in the Mauritian context. The second segment pertains to qualifications in the TVET/Workplace sector and it encompasses all levels of the NQF. The third segment caters for post secondary/tertiary qualifications starting with qualifications (e.g. Diploma, Degree, Masters) at level 6 to 10 and is normally from undergraduate to postgraduate qualifications. **The National Qualifications Framework was developed to ensure greater articulation between education, training and the world of work and also**



Ramesh Ramdass
Ag Manager Framework Services,
MQA

for training to respond to the standards set by industry. At the same time, it aims to encourage lifelong learning through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

In a nutshell, the objectives of the NQF are to:

- Gradually take care of the current problems of certification and accreditation and also give international recognition for vocational qualifications awarded in Mauritius.
- Facilitate entry and exit between the education and training systems, hence widening the scope for career development;
- Enhance lifelong learning. Clear pathways motivate learners to undertake further learning at any point in their lifetime;
- Provide parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications by better articulation of qualification across the sectors of learning;
- Increase employers participation in producing the right skills for industry;
- Provide a rigorous regulatory framework to ensure quality of training supplied;
- Cost savings in terms of training cost for the nation.

Industry Training Advisory Committees

The Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) comprising experts in specified fields have been set up to generate Unit Standards and Qualifications in various fields of the Mauritian economy. A unit standard is the smallest but yet coherent and meaningful outcome of learning or training that is formally recognized and is broken down into smaller more manageable outcomes. It is associated with the standard of performance required as proof that the outcome has been met and defines the context in which the individual is expected to perform.

Thus far, the MQA has set up ITACs in the following fields and has generated around 1160 Unit Standards and 45 Qualifications in various fields of the Mauritian economy:

- Information and Communication Technology
- Printing
- Tourism and Hospitality Management
- Jewellery
- Textile and Apparel
- Health & Social Care
- Building Construction & Civil Engineering
- Adult Literacy
- Seafood & Marine Industry
- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical & Electronics Engineering
- Agro Industry

Each Unit Standard registered on the Framework describes what a learner needs to know or what they must be able to achieve. Registered NQF standards are reviewed on a one to five year cycle by experts and stakeholders. Educational organisations and individuals may also comment on registered NQF standards.

The uniqueness of the system caters for the transferability of knowledge and skills between qualifications and providers because the Unit Standards are nationally agreed.

A Qualification is an award which recognizes that learning has taken place and a standard achieved. It is a planned combination of learning outcomes which has defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with recognition for applied competence and a basis for further learning. It further means the formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and type of credits and such other requirements at specific levels of the NQF as may be determined by the relevant bodies registered for such purpose by the MQA. Qualifications are made up of clusters of outcomes (registered Unit Standard) to meet the needs of industries, enterprises, institutions, society etc. The composition of Qualifications is determined through stakeholder-driven and representative processes.

Qualifications define various recognition needs and provide a quality specification and a basis for the formal recognition of individual ability. They also provide a common currency for learners, providers and other users, as well as a consistent and transparent basis for comparison of qualifications to ensure the integrity of the NQF is maintained.

Moreso, the new training system which is now more outcome-based rather than curriculum-based would require a strong quality assurance mechanism to ensure successful high quality training. This is not only to attain the benefits for Mauritian employees and students, but also to enhance our reputation overseas and to build our good image of an educational hub. ■

National Qualifications Framework: South Africa and Further Afield

The South African National Qualifications Framework is a framework which sets the boundaries - a set of principles and guidelines which provide a vision, a philosophical base and an organisational structure - for construction, in this case, of a qualifications system. Detailed development and implementation is carried out within these boundaries. It is national because it is a national resource, representing a national effort at integrating education and training into a unified structure of recognised qualifications.

The South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) originated from the strong need of the post-1994 African National Congress (ANC) government to reform a disparate and unequal education and training system. New policy-makers attempted to put in place a system that would facilitate access to and mobility and recognition of learning, particularly for those individuals who had been prevented from accessing formal education and training under the previous regime.

A model incorporating every sector and level of education and training was proposed. All stakeholders, including providers of education and training, employers, organized labour and other interested parties, were therefore involved in the conceptualization of the South African NQF.

The NQF was developed as a distinctly South African phenomenon, located within a unique political and historical context and rooted in opposition to apartheid. The concepts and organising principles were drawn from similar developments in Scotland, England, New Zealand and Australia in the mid to late 1980s.

The methodology used to construct the NQF drew on international experience (that South Africa both contributed to and benefited from). The aims and purposes of the NQF in South Africa – transformation of an entire education and training system – were broader and more ambitious than in any other country.

Following the promulgation of the South African Qualifications Authority Act in 1995 (which established the South African NQF), a rapid and comprehensive implementation approach was followed.

During the first few years more than 30 quality assurance bodies were accredited. Twelve national standards bodies and more than one hundred standards generating bodies established.

In addition, a national database was set up and a range of policies and guidelines were developed to further elaborate on the intentions of the SAQA Act and regulations. By 2007, 12 years after the promulgation of the SAQA Act, progress had been made on a number of fronts, including:

- 7.5 million learner records, including more than 20 million achievements, captured on a National Learners' Records Database
- 7 878 qualifications registered
- 8 826 unit standards registered
- 4 694 providers accredited

Following an extended review process that started soon after the NQF was established in 1995 and only ended in 2007, the South African NQF is set to undergo a number of changes over the next two years, including the promulgation of a new NQF Act. Based on the lessons learned during the first phase of NQF development and implementation in South Africa, and considering the direction of the international NQF debates, the following improvements are being considered:

- Continued emphasis on the role of stakeholders, but with a greater reliance on expert involvement.
- Recognition of the differences between sectors, including the possibility of different approaches to qualifications design and quality assurance within one national system.
- Establishment of three "Qualifications and Quality Assurance Councils" to oversee implementation in specific sectors, with SAQA as an overarching structure tasked with overseeing NQF development.

After more than 12 years of development and implementation, and including a process of continued review and scrutiny, South Africa remains committed to the development of a National Qualifications Framework. As more and more countries across the world are embarking on the development of NQFs, this is a time to share experiences and collaborate wherever possible. ■



Dr James Keevy
Dep. Director, SAQA

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

MARCH 2007



The Minister of Education & Human Resources offering a token to Ms Moira McKerracher (from Scottish Qualifications Authority) who facilitated the workshop on NQF

Events

Events



MQA celebrating its 5th Anniversary on 8 May 2007



RPL Workshop



Participation of MQA at the RPL Workshop in Kenya organised by Commonwealth of Learning



Participation of MQA at UNESCO Seminar in Paris



Signing of Memorandum of Technical Cooperation and Partnership with Namibia Qualifications Authority



End of Year gathering at MQA



Signing of MoU between MQA and Botswana Training Authority



Blood Donation by staff of MQA

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Namibia

The Namibia Qualifications Authority was set up through the NQA Act No 29 of 1996 with a view to ensure quality education through credible qualifications. The NQF as set up by NQA promotes lifelong learning and is the national system of qualifications. Much emphasis is laid on the quality of the qualifications being developed.

The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) was established through the NQA Act No 29 of 1996. The intended purpose of the NQA was to ensure that all Namibians were able to realize their potential in quality assured learning environments and achieve qualifications that were credible, legal, and relevant to Vision 2030 goals. A comprehensive and flexible National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that reduced barriers to access and progression in learning and redressed past injustices was seen as key to the realization of its vision.

What is the NQF?

The NQF is a system that provides up-to-date information about all relevant and legal qualifications and unit standards in Namibia. It represents a national qualifications system that creates some consistency in the naming given to different qualifications. The NQF is a powerful tool in promoting lifelong learning in Namibia by ensuring that learning meets the economic, social and cultural needs of Namibia as well as internationally-benchmarked quality standards.

What are the objectives of the NQF?

The NQF was designed to:

- represent the wide range of qualifications available in Namibia so that it is easier to compare them;
- provide a standardized way of describing qualifications so that they are easier to understand;
- give people a clearer understanding of what a person holding any qualification has achieved and is now able to do;
- assist harmonization between different sectors in the education family so that learners may move more freely within and between them;
- provide tools that enable the determination of the value of qualifications from other countries;
- give assurances that registered qualifications will be readily recognized in Namibia as being valuable.

Why have a NQF?

Prior to the NQF being established there were many different qualifications and no simple way of comparing

the different types. Some "certificates" were of the same complexity as some "diplomas". Some "diplomas were worth less than some "certificates". The NQF looks to promote the consistent use of qualification titles.



Mr. Franz E. Gertze
Director, NQA

Learning is not confined to traditional, formal institutions. Learning takes place on-the-job, in the community, via the Web or by distance, and informally. The NQF provides mechanisms for recognizing learning attainment for all people, regardless of when, how or where learning took place.






Qualifications have become important commodities in the knowledge society. It is important that these are valued and are valuable. The NQF provides the quality assurance processes to ensure this.

The NQF represent a comprehensive system of quality assurance checks involving all key stakeholders in industry and education in Namibia. It is a system that brings the world of work and education and training closer together in partnership that makes learning and qualifications more relevant and trustworthy. Above all, the NQF recognizes all relevant learning regardless of how and where it was acquired. It is a system of and for qualifications intended for all people. ■



Welcome address of the Director of MQA
- signing of MoU with NQA

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The Evolution of the Seychelles NQF and the Competency - based Approach to Education and Training

The idea of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Seychelles surfaced in the late 1990s in the then Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development, the Ministry responsible for human resource development and manpower co-ordination in Seychelles. Influenced by the development of frameworks in the (SADC) region and across the Commonwealth, and belabouring the skills shortage in the country coupled with the mismatch between the qualifications offered locally to meet the needs of the workplace, some leading officials saw in this a vehicle for the amelioration of the situation. With their views converging with that of government ministers, they received a ready ear from the National Vocational Training Board (NVTB), the body which had decision-making powers about vocational education and training affairs in the country to make the NQF a government policy.



Jean Michel Domingue
Director, SQA

The rationale for this policy was articulated by the Manpower Division in 1999 to ensure comprehensiveness in the recognition of learning and qualifications attained in the country, to promote an integrated approach to education and training, increased articulation of learning programmes and mobility of learners within a coherent and integrated learning system, and to ensure a qualitative education and training system. In addition, the policy offered a consistent framework of principles and certification which would allow learners to clearly link credits into a meaningful learning mainstream pathway, provide entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective learners in a manner which facilitates progression, and enable learners to transfer their credits from one education and training system to another. Even at this stage it was agreed that the policy would allow for qualifications based on competency standards linked to workplace requirements and with a specific focus on promoting the development of competency based career paths and the qualifications required to perform functions at different levels (Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development 1999).

With the lack of expertise to undertake the tasks leading to an NQF, the government sought assistance from abroad to conduct a study on how and in what stages the NQF could be developed. Corneels Jafta from Namibia was entrusted with the task. Jafta's report was a seminal event in the progress towards a Seychelles NQF (Jafta 1999). It firstly gave confidence to the NVTB and, by consequence the government, that the Seychelles could move towards the NQF, and that it would serve to improve the existing situation.

While it made recommendations on several issues that would need to be addressed along the way (e.g. the need to engage industry and business in the NQF, train standards setters, integrate education and training,

achieve parity of esteem for local qualifications, and move towards an outcome-based system), the immediate need to appoint a National Working Party to develop the concept of NQF and draft legislation for an authoritative body to develop and implement the NQF were the most significant recommendations in the short term.

Secondly, the report also provided a road map which was to underpin the efforts of the NQF Working Group as well the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) when that eventually became a reality in 2006. However, it was to be left to the nascent SQA several years down the line to develop the concept of NQF immediately after its creation.

On the basis of the recommendations from the report, the Vice President appointed a Working Group in September 2000 responsible to the NVTB with the mandate to develop the concept of the National Qualifications Framework, including draft legislation.

The Working Group was also tasked to make recommendations for the establishment of NQF to assess and award national qualifications according to set standards (Michel 2000). The Working Group subsequently developed a qualifications map and the legislation for a National Qualifications Authority.

The National Education Conference of 2003 was dedicated to the competency-based approach to curriculum. One of the outcomes was a recommendation for the Ministry of Education and Youth to seriously consider the adoption of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) for curriculum development and implementation (Ministry of Education and Youth 2003).

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There was consensus that this approach was appropriate since it provides for the all-round development of the person, engages the labour market at critical junctures and makes for training which is job specific, highly flexible and student-centred. Its systematic approach to course development, inclusive of steps to involve the labour market, had been shown in the development of the two trial programmes of Tour Guiding and Environmental Health Officer. Feedback from the industry indicated increased satisfaction with the performance of the graduates. The CBA model addressed the strongest indictment of the current practices; that of the relevance of training. By the time the project ended in 2005 enough capacity had been built for the task of curriculum transformation to be confidently undertaken in the post-secondary institutions. The Lead Curriculum Development Group managed by the FED section could confidently begin the review of all local programmes, a task which is now at the half way stage.

If the people of Seychelles continue to perceive the national qualifications to be inferior to or less desirable than foreign qualifications, then the effort and expense of establishing a National Qualifications Framework would be wasted." (Jafta 1999:24)

At the end of the day, it was commonly accepted that a successful national qualifications framework would derive from a successful CBA drive, provided that the local product gained credibility.

On the other hand, NQF policy-guidelines and regulations will serve to give a structure for the management of the CBA drive in the public post-secondary institutions. Given the absence of a higher education sector, and the existence of what is virtually a sub framework in the form of the National Curriculum for Schools, the post secondary landscape in Seychelles is the area where the framework will have the most impact. It is therefore more within the context of the educational trajectory at that particular level that the NQF is situating itself. ■



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V. Ramchurn
 Manager, Quality Assurance,
 MQA

It is argued that change is an integral function of organisational life and of education in particular. Rather than viewing 'equilibrium' as the norm, it is suggested that "change and transition" are more typical of contemporary life. Moreso, in present economic situation, small state economies have to view 'change' as a major event which must be 'coped with' rather than a natural consequence of the way things are in the world.

Today, globalisation of education and training is being promoted by governments, public and private agencies seeking to make financial gains from the trade as well as offering educational benefits to their 'customers'. Traditional ways of learning are left out for other modes of learning such as distance education and e-learning. Sustained economic growth will be conditional to a highly educated and skilled workforce capable to cope with change. Success depends on factors such as quality (including accreditation), accessibility and support provided to students. Failure has been traced to poor quality courses, weak marketing and lack of legal standing. Yet far too little is understood about other factors that may be important.

The challenge for leaders in the field of current technical and vocational training is related to the evolution of new labour force that is changed by attitudes and values and also related to the change of institutional structure to assuring success in this global competition era. The quality of training processes in technical and vocational institutions would guarantee the trainee competition capacity in the labour market and also guarantees the trainees' skills and ability and meet the private needs. Technical and vocational institutions need to have competency in providing quality training that can satisfy both trainees and employers to contribute towards the development of the country.

Quality v/s Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is an important issue in this competitive new world. Quality and quality assurance are two different concepts, though related to each other. "Quality" is related to the question " what " whereas " quality assurance " is related to the question "how". In the area of technical and vocational training-quality (or "what") is related to the training standard or competency, to the objective that shall be achieved through training or to the competency and level of smart that need to be fulfilled, whereas quality assurance (or "how") focuses on framework of curriculum development, examination, management and training certification in order to achieve the objectives and training standards.

Moving one step further from an analytical standpoint, it is noted that quality assurance needs in the local practice have

changed with increased globalisation of education and training and the growth of distance learning

International perspective to QA

Various countries like New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, Canada and UK amongst others, are striving to achieve quality education and training. The idea of having a reliable quality assurance structure is reckoned. In the 1999, International Conference on Technical and vocational education (TVET) held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, it was pointed out that "quality assurance is essential to ensure a new higher status for TVET. Qualification standards, certification processes, valid assessment methods and acceptable outcomes are all key ingredients and should be the hallmarks of all TVET systems".

At the Gaborone workshop for SADC countries, the participants agreed that the main aim of a quality assurance programme was to "deliver quality vocational training through improved systems of quality assurance and through mechanisms ensuring the reliability of TVET standards up to diploma level in Member States". It appears that quality assurance is a major concern for almost all countries. It has been observed that international agencies and nations are responding to the opportunities and challenges posed to education and training albeit one commonality remaining persistent for almost all cases is that of education and training being viewed as services. Yet some countries are still grappling to find a coherent quality assurance mechanism by amending existing legal, institutional, and policy frameworks thus making provision for the new challenges of the global economy.

Mauritian TVET: Recent Legislative Amendments.

Recently, Education and training authorities in Mauritius have been conscious of the need to assure the quality of education and training provided. Different bodies have been given statutory responsibilities in specific areas. Through the recent legislative changes under the Education and Training (Miscellaneous) Act, 2005, the necessary harmonization has been effected such that responsibilities for ensuring quality, standards, recognition, determination of equivalence of qualifications in the various sectors of education and training have been made explicit.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) have responsibilities for primary and secondary education, and Postsecondary Education respectively. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) on the other hand now has the responsibility for technical and vocational training. The functions of the National Accreditation and Equivalence Council (NAEC) is taken over by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

The characteristics of a TVET system, the institutional structures and the type of training programmes delivered are all related to the dominant form of production within a country's economy. In Mauritius, the TVET system has developed to suit low value-added forms of production, with institutional structures being designed to support the immediate needs of employers. The system has not had to respond to widespread unemployment nor to wider implications of employability of the Mauritian labour force. Any lifelong learning system must have quality as a key element, and the quality of TVET is inextricably linked to that of its teachers and trainers. The key challenge is to develop a system that will enable energy to be focused on learning and teaching, allowing lifelong learning providers to be innovative and to develop, whilst also securing value for money and appropriate levels of quality.

Quality Assurance at MQA

The MQA has an overarching role in quality assuring qualifications and is directly responsible for the quality assurance of all education and training at the TVET level Registration, course approval, accreditation, and ongoing quality assurance are the four main features of the quality assurance process. .

- Registration of training institution indicates that a training provider is capable of providing high quality education and training in a sound and safe learning environment.
- Course approval provides the public with an assurance that courses have been checked for quality and have undergone systematic evaluation towards confirming that they are relevant and meet criteria and standards laid down by the MQA..
- Accreditation of providers ensures that providers have the capacity to deliver to specified unit standards, and that assessors have the capacity to assess learning against specified unit standards
- An accredited programme is a coherent programme that is based on clear and consistent aims, content, outcomes and assessment practices.
- A provider must be registered and the programme accredited to be able to deliver an award course.
- On-going quality assurance

Once registered, an on-going quality assurance takes place. The MQA takes a partnership approach to assessing quality and relies through ongoing monitoring of provider activity; and self-evaluation by providers

Way Forward

As at now 20 foreign awarding bodies are collaborating with 74 training institutions through franchise of which many are running distance programmes in the TVET sector. Change in cross border education is now rapid and continuous. The increasing transfer of education between countries means education is becoming increasingly globalised. Alongside, educational products are often regarded as a trade commodity. In this way, they are increasingly tied to the market and consumer demand, as well as to the need to make a financial return for providers. When consumer demand and the need to make a financial return becomes a factor influencing the offer of educational provision, it can create a tension with other priorities such as academic standards, autonomy and integrity. This tension can, in turn, give rise to problems with quality and consumer protection issues. An extreme example of the problems that can arise are the so-called "diploma mills" that offer qualifications for little or no study, but at a price. Often the qualifications "bought" at a diploma mill are of little or no value to the students.

In cross-border education, the usual issues associated with quality assurance are added to and complicated by issues of distance and the need to operate within different legal and cultural frameworks. If not carefully managed, there are opportunities for significant problems to arise and failures to occur.

The extent of regulation

The Authority regulatory framework faces the challenges of assuring quality for these different scenarios with respect to protecting students and the public from poor quality of education & training. Since the environment is fast changing, a developmental approach is suggested to Quality Assurance Standards. It should be noted that all regulations and requirements under a regulatory framework are ultimately designed for purposes of consumer protection and it would, perhaps, be better to have separate requirements for different situations. Any regulatory system need to have some form of legal backing if it is to be enforced, unless it is a voluntary system of registration and accreditation, where registration/accreditation is dependent upon goodwill. The extent of regulation still remains an open debate. ■

Source:-

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Quality Assurance at the University of Mauritius

The aim of Quality Assurance (QA) in Higher Education is to ensure that appropriate standards are achieved and good quality education is being offered. It is also about ensuring that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided to learners.

Several broad trends, including the trend towards mass higher education, growing diversity of educational offerings, the internationalisation of higher education and the expansion of private higher education institutions and of distance learning, have fostered interest in QA policies in higher education. Another factor has been the growing pressure on Governments to limit public expenditure. Consequently, universities everywhere are increasingly expected to demonstrate that standards and quality of provision are maintained and enhanced.

Various definitions have been put forward for QA in higher education. According to Wahlen (1998), QA in higher education is the activity that aims at maintaining and raising quality, e.g. research, analysis, assessing acceptability, recruitment, appointment procedures and different mechanisms and systems. **The aim of quality assurance in higher education is to guarantee the improvement of standards and quality in higher education in order to make higher education meet the needs of students, employers and financers (Lomas, 2002).** QA is often presented as a technical issue that involves terms and procedures from handbooks. According to Harvey (1999), QA is based on three main principles: control, accountability and improvement.

Accountability usually requires meeting the preferences of policy makers, outside parties and financers. Control means that the institution does not merely control the expenditure of resources but also shows how high quality is achievable with the existing resources. It raises the issue of the definition of "good value". Improvement is probably the most widely spread aim of quality assurance. It enables the institution to get necessary input, refine the process and raise the standards of



University of Mauritius

output in order to meet the goals set.

Considering the inevitable need to align to the above trend of assuring quality at the institution, the University of Mauritius (UoM) set out to establish a Quality Assurance Framework in 1998. The Strategic Plan 1999-2004 clearly depicted the commitment of the University towards QA and Enhancement through the following strategic objectives:

Ensuring relevance

Interact proactively with the world of work and the community to cater for emergent requirements while inculcating a wider sense of belonging to the University.

Ensuring Quality of Teaching and Learning

Enhance existing provisions for continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and work progressively towards the implementation of best practice.

Strengthen Research

Develop further the University's research capacity and research management plan.

Internationalise the University

Improve the international standing of the University and expand its role and programme activities.

Several resource persons, namely Professor Linda Thomas (Dec 2000), Pro-Vice-Chancellor for QA at Brunel University, Professor A Davidson (Sep 2001), Director of Quality Assurance, University of Dundee, Scotland, and Dr E Genis (Apr-May 2002), Chief Director of Quality Promotion, Technikon Pretoria, South Africa were invited to assist the University in this task.

Workshops were conducted, seminars were held and training programmes were organised in the fields of Subject Audit and Institutional Audit. A mock institutional audit was carried out in December 2000 and as a result several recommendations were put forward to the University. In line with these recommendations, the membership, terms of reference of the University/Faculty/Centre/Central Administration QA Teams were approved and the post of Director of QA was created.



Dr B K Baguant
Head Quality Assurance,
UOM

The QA Framework was approved in May 2002 and a Quality Assurance Office, headed by a Director of QA was set up in October 2002. As the first activities of the QA Office were geared mainly towards teaching and learning, it was deemed appropriate that the Office should fall under the aegis of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning). The following specific approaches to quality management were adopted by the University:

- The gradual integration of quality improvement processes throughout the University.
- The enhancement of the University of Mauritius quality system.
- Specific approaches to quality assurance of core activities, with initial focus on Teaching and Learning.
- Improvement of the University's overall management practices.

The guiding principles for promoting a quality culture at the University were the commitment of the Top Management, the pursuit of continuous enhancement and the belief that everyone at the University has the responsibility for quality.

Some relatively more recent QA Initiatives of the University include setting up of the Excellence Park, putting in place an online Student Feedback Questionnaire system, Setting up of an Examinations Office, Introduction of Summer/Winter courses, Setting up of a MRes in Research Methodology, Introduction of Work-Based Learning in all Programmes of Studies and Auditing of Lectures.

QA is an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating, monitoring, maintaining and improving the system with a view to ensuring process efficiency and quality outputs. The University of Mauritius today has been able to meet most of the recommendations of the Audit's Report and its QA measures are striving to gear themselves towards the Strategic Directions 2006/2015 which were approved by the Council of the University in February 2006. ■



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Recognition of Prior Learning in Mauritius

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a new concept which would enable individuals to obtain recognition of their previously acquired experiences and learning. This new system had reckoned a pilot project for the Tourism and Hospitality Industry which started in 2007. A two phase process has been adopted, whereby the applicant would have to submit in the first instance, a portfolio with appropriate evidences to support his claim for RPL. The second phase is the process of assessment. A candidate to RPL can benefit from various advantages, amongst others the possibility to pursue lifelong learning.

RPL is based on the awareness that people does not learn only through education and training but in many different ways throughout their lifetime. RPL takes into account a person's skills and experiences, no matter where these were learnt, and how they were acquired.

In 2007, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) launched its first pilot project on RPL for the Tourism and Hospitality Industry. This industry is facing major challenges with the advent of globalization and requires skilled labour force while the Mauritian Tourism Industry is considering the possibility to receive up to 2 million tourists by 2015. In the wake of this formidable challenge, RPL will provide this booming industry with adequate and reliable employees.

In this context, the RPL pilot project in the sector would be beneficial to the employer who would acknowledge the competencies of its employees or future employees. The applicant, i.e. the employee would feel a boost up of his/her self-esteem thereby triggering the motivation for further learning and self development thus contributing more to the enhanced development of the industry.

Implication of Unit Standards

The RPL process relies on the generation of unit standards by the MQA together with the help of the Industry in the appropriate sector. These unit standards are outcome based and allow for any individual to request that his/her competence be recognized against those outcome based qualifications. So far the MQA has generated 47 qualifications which are outcome based.

The two phase process of the RPL Process

The RPL itself is a two phase process. Any individual with prior skills and experience in a specific sector can request for an RPL, provided that the qualification against which he intends to be assessed is already developed and that s/he has more than three years of experience in the sector. The candidate to RPL may lodge an application to the MQA, by filling his/her portfolio and substantiate all his/her claimed experiences and skills by appropriate documents. Evidences are very much important for that process; that is the collection of data and filling of the portfolio would be facilitated by facilitators, already trained by international experts for that purpose. Evidences which may be submitted are as follows:

- a resumé
- certificates of completed short courses



R Domah
Programme Officer, MQA

- references from employers outlining responsibilities
- letters from clients
- evaluations from supervisors
- job description
- pictures

Assessment: the second phase

A period of three months is granted to the candidate for the submission of his completed portfolio. This document is then sent to the assessing body. The assessment is based on the competencies as claimed by the candidate. The assessment can take the form of an interview or of a work demonstration situation; the assessment modalities would be decided by the panel of jury. A candidate may obtain partial or full credit for the experience and skills demonstrated.

Benefits of an RPL process to the candidate

Benefits to the candidate willing to have his/her experience recognised are numerous and can be outlined as follows:

- i) Ease transition from informal to formal learning by enabling the candidates to value their achievements and to recognise the importance of their learning through experience;
- ii) Prepare for further learning and personal/career development;
- iii) Gain general credit which is not related to a particular formal learning programme;
- iv) Gain entry to a programme of study(if they do not have the normal entry requirements); and
- v) Obtain credit towards a programme of study and so allow them to join at a later level shortening the period of study.

The reasons for a candidate to request for her/his prior experience to be recognised can be different from one individual to another. ■



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Recognition of Prior Learning in Australia

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an integral component of the vocational education and training (VET) system in Australia. It provides a way of recognizing skills and knowledge that already exist, regardless of how, when or where the learning took place, so that they may be counted towards the achievement of a qualification.

History:

RPL was introduced into Australia as part of a National Qualifications Framework in 1993. It is now part of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) charter and the standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) delivering accredited training. Within these charters and standards, it is mandatory for RPL to be offered to all applicants on enrolment.

The National Principles and Operational Guidelines for RPL, compiled by the AQF Advisory Board and endorsed in 2004, list seventeen principles for RPL. The principles, which have most relevance here are:

Principle 3: RPL is critical to the development of an open, accessible, inclusive, integrated and relevant post-compulsory education and training system, and is a key foundation for lifelong learning policies that encourage individuals to participate in learning pathways, that include formal, nonformal and informal learning;

Principle 4: There is no one RPL model that is suitable for all qualifications and all situations. In particular, different sectors give rise to different models. The model of RPL that is implemented must be aligned with the outcomes, goals and objectives of the qualification;

Principle 9: RPL assessment should be based on evidence, and should be equitable, culturally inclusive, fair, flexible, valid and reliable;

Principle 14: RPL information and support services should be actively promoted, easy to understand and recognise the diversity of learners;

Principle 16: Jurisdictions, institutions and providers should include RPL in access strategies for disadvantaged learners who are not in the workforce, or marginally attached to the workforce, and who are not already engaged with studying and training.

Recent Times:

RPL is important in Australia as employers are seeking out workers who have qualifications and the major reason for an increasing demand for workers with qualifications is to ensure the deepening of the skills base in Australia thus creating more workers with higher skill levels.



Carmel Thompson
Australia

Skills shortages have been identified by the Reserve Bank of Australia as being a factor contributing to higher inflation and interest rates. Therefore you can see why the promotion of a process to increase the recognition of current competencies in our workforce is currently attracting our governments attention as well as funding.

Skills first initiative:

Through the Skills First Initiative, the Queensland Government is driving a new approach to recognition of prior learning Skills First encourages the recognition of a person's knowledge and skills before their training commences ie the applicant may be provided with either a full qualification or a part qualification and avoid duplication of training. The process is used to identify what training is required in order to complete a qualification, or to provide a pathway to higher qualifications.

Training organizations (public and private) go through a preferred supplier process whereby the Queensland Government will pay \$A500 towards the cost of the applicant's RPL process. The RTO or TAFE (training organisation) receives the payment when the process is completed.

The applicant applies in the first instance to a Skilling Solutions Centre (often in a local shopping center) and are put through a software program that assists them in identifying what competencies they currently have and what qualifications they could reasonably expect to be successful in gaining RPL for. Then they are referred to a list of preferred supplier training organizations (TAFEs or RTOs) to undergo the RPL process.

The introduction of this program in mid 2007 has proven to be very successful and in 2008 will be continued and promoted through the media to make workers aware of the process.

In conclusion, employers, government and training organizations in Australia recognize RPL as being an extremely important process and a key component of a strategy to be implemented in order to support the upskilling of our current workforce and to prepare us for the challenges of skill shortages in the near future. ■

Poulet frais
Chantecler

Enn goût qui nou kontan



The Changing Concept of RPL – the Case of Ireland

Interest in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at policy level in Ireland has never been more intense than at the start of 2008. The main reason for this interest is the imminent visit to Ireland of an expert team from the OECD related to their activity: Recognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning (RNFL). That OECD visit is being used by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) as an opportunity to progress the development of a national RPL strategy promised as a follow-up to their June 2006 document: Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training.



Dr Anne Murphy
Ireland

The RPL Advisory Group which assisted the NQAI in drawing up the principles and guidelines has been re-convened, both to facilitate the OECD visit, and to progress a national strategy. It is likely that the findings and recommendations from the OECD study visit will greatly determine the particular concept of RPL which informs the subsequent national strategy.

Current policy and practice interest in RPL, in higher education particularly, is the implementation of a major research project funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under its Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), called 'Education in Employment'. That project involves a consortium of higher education providers and awarding bodies from the three main sectors: Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC), The Dublin Institute of Technology, and the universities, all of which have worked with different concepts and models of RPL heretofore. This SIF project has four related but separate strands: RPL, Work-based Learning, Progression for Craft Apprentices, and recognition for non-national awards. The RPL strand includes an expectation that its activities will progress the RPL concepts and models developed through an earlier RPL project called 'Líonra', which was also a consortium project which involved both further and higher education providers, and employers, in the EU Development Category 1 area of the mid-lands, west, and areas bordering Northern Ireland. The SIF RPL project has representation on the NQAI RPL Advisory Group and anticipates having significant influence on the concept and model of RPL that will inform a national strategy. The partners in the project are also to meet the OECD team with a focus of RPL in employment and how higher education is adjusting internal structures in response. So, it could be argued that the forthcoming OECD visit is likely to determine the concept and models of RPL in Ireland at national policy level in the immediate future. It is therefore reasonable to assume that such policies and subsequent practices will be related to the needs of the labour market and economy, driven predominantly by human capital theory and economic capital concerns.

Practitioners who have long involvement with RPL, or APEL, in Ireland will notice significant changes in the drivers of APEL and in how it is being conceptualised. In particular they will notice that the drivers are no longer the adult and community-based education sector whose main concern is for social inclusion and opportunities for

marginalised citizens, and secondly, they will notice that the concept of APEL has moved from a model of empowerment and development to a technicist, market-led, credit-exchange model. The 'technologies' of APEL/RPL have also changed significantly in Ireland, from a holistic, personal histories/reflective model to an atomistic one which uses learning outcomes, module descriptors, ECTS credits and frameworks of levels. While one model does not necessarily exclude the other, there is a reasonable argument that the two models operate from very different philosophies, epistemologies and theories of learning from experience. Critics of current concepts of RPL in Ireland would argue that the underpinning philosophy is now one of neo-liberalism which abandoned its original roots in the empowerment and liberation ideas of adult education. They argue that emerging concepts and proposed practices of RPL do little to effect change in how higher education structures elite knowledge and determines what counts as legitimate knowledge. Additionally they argue that higher education has now secured the power to frame learning within the technologies of its programme descriptors and sets of learning outcomes and credit systems. The limited use of RPL by higher education providers, with the exception of the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), has not yet significantly altered the traditional knowledge structures of academia.

Rather, it could be argued, that RPL services that are marginal to normal academic activities, are reinforcing the concept of RPL as a marginal activity of less importance than the traditional business of learning and teaching. The exception to this is the DIT where RPL, including APEL, has been integral to practices at programme level for a long time now for access, transfer and progression. Without the dictate of policy directives, it was regarded as a normal academic activity. Additionally, it is the first higher education provider which offers staff training opportunities in both the scholarship and practice of RPL, and where RPL and work-based learning curricula and pedagogies are identified as sharing similar epistemologies and learning theories. It will be interesting to track the sustainability of this model within a wider national RPL strategy and within OECD philosophies.

The high unemployment rates of the first half of the 1990s prompted calls for APEL as one possible means of maintaining civic cohesion in marginalised communities and workforce sectors. However, these calls abated rapidly and were replaced by calls for RPL as a means of upskilling the workforce and of increasing qualifications levels relative to the levels of newly arrived mobile migrant workers from EU member states. The concept of RPL is now firmly entwined with the needs of the economy and the need to maintain competitiveness in high-value employment sectors through skills enhancement and education credentials.

The 'target' groups for RPL are now low-skilled workers, older workers who may need to be redeployed, and sectors of the workforce who are obliged to hold accreditation for practice. RPL is regarded as a tool to keep Ireland 'ahead of the curve' and to respond rapidly to anticipated future skills needs. Higher education providers are responding in their own terms to this changed RPL landscape in more ways than providing RPL services for registered mature students. It is possible, but not general practice, for higher education providers to include an element of RPL in programme partnership agreement with companies and statutory bodies and to 'recognise' prior learning in work for groups of staff. Arrangements for entry at Advanced Standing on the basis of APEL alone are not a common practice, but it is possible. Databases of national and international awards related to the national qualifications framework are facilitating RPL at procedural level generally. Exceptional, or non-standard, entry to postgraduate study is becoming easier for the same reason. It is also possible to achieve a full award on the basis of APEL from some awarding bodies since programme learning outcomes are now an obligatory 'technology'.

While the concept of RPL has changed in Ireland there has not been a significant growth in numbers of applicants relative to the energy invested in policies, research projects and scholarship. The reasons for this are complex. One reason is certainly the fact that we have almost full employment within our current qualifications profile. A second reason is that there is a surplus of places in higher education – particularly on part-time programme - with free fees for mature



students who wish to study full-time. Another reason is a very generous system of vocational training with flexible delivery such as block release, and a well-paid apprenticeship system. While this context continues, we can afford inertia with regard to RPL.

However, mobility of EU workers and the possibility of a downturn in the economy will inevitably highlight the sectors of the population at risk economically and socially and for whom RPL may be necessary in the future. Additionally, the 'mobility' of high value multinational companies, upon which our continued prosperity depends, may expose the need for responsive systems to increase the qualifications profile of workers generally. RPL may have a future role in this regard. However, RPL requires resources and strategies. It is likely that both resources and strategies may become the focus of the OECD recommendation in their report for Ireland and for the other countries taking part in their RNFIL/RPL study. It is indeed likely that both RPL resources and strategies will be intertwined with economic concerns for the foreseeable future. It is all about the economy! ■

Source

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Sega 4 Couleurs



1. Maurice Nu Ti Pays
Séga La Li Dan Nu Disan
Sa Mem Nu Lamizik
Ki Ti Zoué Par Nu
Descendant
2. Vibrasyon La Li Dan Nu
Ravanne
Maravanne Nu Sakouyé
Pa Blié Nu Ti Triangle
Nu Apé Cadence Nu Ti Zil
3. Chinois Indou Morisien
Chrétien Mizilman Morisien
Sa Mem Couleur Nu Ti Zil
Ki Ti Exist Par Nu
Descendant

Refrain

Nu Kat Couleur Sa Nu Valer
Langaz Créole Nu Tu Kozér
Ti Frer Li Mem Papa Nou
Séga
Ensam Nu Tu Nu Crié

Wati Ley Lo, Wati Ley Lo
Wati Ley Lo, La Lay La La La
Eh Lolo

Ramsès Louis
MQA



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MQA on the Move

Government is determined to transform the current training system and this commitment is reflected in the Government Programme 2005-2010. In fact, this strategy propels the TVET sector as a key driver in the process of economic reform and towards people-centered development. In a context where change is the only constant, the principle of lifelong learning is to be reinforced to maintain a vibrant, flexible and innovative human capital.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The MQA proposes an outcome-based training system for Mauritius as a key means to solve the country's skills problem. The development of national certificates in critical sectors of our economy provides a new way of obtaining qualifications registered on the NQF, intended to overcome the division between academic education and technical & vocational training. They also provide opportunities for lifelong learning and transportability since the system is credit-based and thus making learning flexible.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The MQA has initiated a pilot project in RPL for the tourism sector since September 2007. Once the RPL system is fully engineered, it would be applied at a national level to cover other critical sectors. No stone will be left unturned to make this project happen and an adapted RPL system will only help in unleashing the potential of our human capital.

International Linkages

As an outward looking organization, the MQA will enhance its participation in the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) in the SADC region. Moreover, our active participation in the formulation of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for Virtual University of Small State Countries (VUSSC) of the Commonwealth is to be put on record. This strategic concept will not only provide a leeway for promoting Mutual Recognition of Qualifications among member states but also catalyze the TQF process by harmonizing National Qualifications Frameworks. The MQA is thinking global and networking with other international partners will nurture a community of practice that can only shape dynamic and effective training systems.

Regulations

In a context of innovativeness and technological advancement, training practices are exceeding current regulations. It is imperative that continued review of regulations be made and quality assurance mechanisms be enhanced at all levels. The MQA in collaboration with its stakeholders will endeavour in capacity building to help training providers in adjusting their practices with world class standards. ■

MQA Management



Senior Officials meeting in Singapore for the development of the Transnational Qualifications Framework organised by Commonwealth of Learning



THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY EDUCATION	TVET / WORKPLACE	TERTIARY EDUCATION	LEVEL
10			Doctorate	10
9			Masters Degrees eg MA, MSc, MPhil	9
			Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma	
8			Bachelor Degree with Honours, Conversion Programmes	8
7			Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)	7
6		Diploma	Diploma	6
5	HSC / GCE 'A' Level / BAC / IBAC	Certificate	Certificate	5
4				4
3	SC / GCE 'O' Level			3
2				2
1	Certificate of Primary Education			1



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