Fabienne-Agnes Baumann:

National Qualifications Frameworks in sub-Sahara Africa.

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Abstract

National qualifications frameworks are currently described as a global phenomenon, a label which accounts for the fact, that frameworks in their different shapes are increasingly subject to policy transfer and thus more and more frameworks are developed in many countries across the globe. The supposed benefits of national qualifications frameworks seem to be convincing, therefore the concept of qualifications frameworks whether national or otherwise in scope, has been greeted with much enthusiasm in literature. Many policy makers perceive national qualifications frameworks as a key driver for reform in the qualifications system, where the latter might be characterized by fragmentation, exclusion of certain groups, a lack of quality assurance or resources, uncoordinated qualification routes, a multitude of providers and awards and so forth.

As will be shown in this thesis, unfortunately and not surprisingly there are also downsides to the NQF approach and of course NQFs are not a "quick-fix" solution.

As NQFs apparently appeal especially to developing countries, including many in sub-Sahara Africa, this thesis attempts to analyze national qualifications frameworks policy in sub-Sahara Africa through selected case studies.

For the sake of a comprehensible structure, the following paper is divided into two sections. Section 1 deals with the conceptualization of national qualifications frameworks, where origins and purposes of NQFs are outlined and NQFs in the context of developing countries are discussed. Further, some examples of current NQF activities in sub-Sahara Africa are presented, concluding Section 1 with a look at the proposed transnational framework for the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Section 2 is dedicated to the case studies, Mauritius and Seychelles. Here, the respective NQF policy of the two countries is outlined, comprising above all the starting points and circumstances of NQF development, the reasons for the framework's introduction, policy aims, identification of stakeholders and the approaches to implementation, governance and design of the NQF. Naturally, background information on history, the educational system and socio-economic situation of both countries is provided as well.

The information on NQF policy in the selected case study countries is structured based on Dolowitz's and Marsh's (1996, 2000) concept of policy transfer, more precisely several leading research questions have been formulated, derived from their so called "policy transfer

framework". Policy transfer is one of approaches which emerged in the discipline of comparative policy analysis to make sense of the internationalization of policy fields. To date, most NQF studies use the dialectic of 'policy borrowing' or 'policy learning' and sometimes also 'policy convergence' or 'diffusion'. It appears that the terms are sometimes used as a synonym, which in this thesis is argued to be problematic and confusing as they are not the same.

Additionally, this thesis addresses two core massages which can be found in most NQF studies: (i) 'the global dissemination of NQFs is a product of policy borrowing[1]' and (ii) 'it would be better if countries would rather *learn* from each other's experience instead of borrowing NQF approaches from elsewhere'. Not only are the notions of borrowing and learning discussed, it is also shown that the picture is drawn too simplistic.

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[1] The so called 'early starter countries' [Australia, United Kingdom (UK) comprising England, Wales and Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa] are said to be prominent examples of policy borrowing.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BNCQF	Botswana National Credit and Qualifications Framework
BNQA	Botswana National Qualifications Authority
BNVQF	Botswana National Vocational Qualifications Framework
BOTA	Botswana Training Authority
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CIA WF	Central Intelligence World Factbook
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education [Mauritius]
CSO	Central Statistics Office [Mauritius]
CTO	Central Training Office [Mauritius]
EDROC	Education Reform Oversight Committee [Seychelles]
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FDI	Fashion and Design Institute [Mauritius]
GOs	Governmental Organizations
GSQF	Gambia Skills and Qualifications Framework
HENQF	Higher Education National Qualifications Framework [Rwanda]
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council [Mauritius]
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICGSE	International Certificate of General Secondary Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
IST	Institut Supérieur de Technologie [Mauritius]

ITAC	Industry Training Advisory Committee [Mauritius]
ITTC	Industrial Trade Training Centre [Mauritius]
IVETA	International Vocational Education and Training Association
IVTB	Industrial and Vocational Training Board [Mauritius]
Kie	Kigali Institute of Education
Kist	Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
LU	University of London
MCA	Mauritius College of the Air
MES	Mauritius Examination Syndicate
MGI	Mahatma Gandhi Institute [Mauritius]
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MoE	Mauritius Ministry of Education
MoHRDE	Mauritius Ministry of Environment, Human Resource Development and Employment
MoTSDP	Mauritius Ministry of Training, Skills Development and Productivity
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics [Seychelles]
NCCRD	National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development [Mauritius]
	NGOs Non-governmental Organizations
NHRDC	National Human Resource Development Council [Seychelles]
NNQF	Namibian National Qualifications Framework
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework [also QF Qualifications Framework]
NTA	National Training Authority [Gambia]
NTC	National Trade Certificate [Mauritius]
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework

OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PSC	Project Steering Committee [Mauritius]
PRIMTAF	Programme de Renforcement Institutionnel en Matière Technologique en Afrique Francophone
PSSA	Private Secondary School Authority [Mauritius]
REO	Regional Education Office [Mauritius]
RoM	Republic of Mauritius
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RTI	Rabindranath Tagore Institute [Mauritius]
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQA	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Authority
SADCQF	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDIM	Swami Dayanand Institute of Management [Mauritius]
SQA	Seychelles Qualifications Authority / Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSC	Standard Setting Committee [Seychelles]
SUF	Seychelles University Foundation
TCCA	Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation [SADC]
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission [Mauritius]
TF	Standard Setting Task Force [Seychelles]
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa [UNESCO]
TQF	Transnational Qualifications Framework
UNESCO IBE	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Bureau of Education
UniSey	University of Seychelles
UK	United Kingdom
UTM	University of Technology Mauritius

UoM   University of Mauritius

VET   Vocational Education and Training

VUSSC   [Framework for the] Virtual University of the Small Commonwealth States

Notes on some terms and concepts used in this thesis

The study of qualifications frameworks necessitates shedding light on certain issues which often arise and are debated in the NQF context, for instance 'qualification', 'outcomes', or 'competence'. These terms frequently cause confusion due to their ambiguity and variety of application, their understanding differs in connection to the socio-cultural context, to the type of qualifications framework and to the objectives that the NQF embodies[2]. All the terms and concepts seem to melt into a 'NQF jargon'. It therefore seems necessary to preface this thesis with this note on the terms and concepts used. The intention is to provide some background information eventually leading to a more thorough understanding of the development of NQFs, rather than critically discussing the topics as this would strain the volume of this thesis.

Ability, skills and knowledge

'Ability' refers to the capability of a person to do something. Depending on the context -physically or cognitive- ability is most of the times *given* and not acquired. The opposite is true for 'skills'. A person can be *able* to play the guitar but does not have the *skill* to do so because e.g. he/she never took lessons. Skills are also used in connection to 'occupation' or more generally to the labor market e.g. in the context of increasing the 'skills' level of employees to strengthen the work force. 'Knowledge' can be seen as the totality of all abilities and acquired skills of a person (North and Reinhardt, 2005, p.31).

Qualifications

Qualification has two basic meanings. The first one describes qualification as a proof of the completion of an education or training process in an institution. In that case qualifications are measurable through formal assessment and performance indicators such as exams and are commonly formally recognized by certification. Qualifications are then also linked to a certain profession or to a specific [school or university] subject/course and they are attributed a value or are a sort of currency for the labor market (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.6).

The second definition is broader and is used as a general term for education and training programs, hence a 'qualification system'[3] would encompass the totality of a country's education and training provision. There are further context and/or country specific meanings.

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[2] Even if the same terms are used in the case studies they might imply a different meaning according to the specific context of the Mauritian or Seychellois NQF. If so, the alternative will be pointed out.

[3] For convenience, 'qualification system' is used interchangeably with 'educational system' or 'education and training system'.

However qualifications always are more or less directly connected to economic competitiveness, opportunities in and through education and to social inclusion (Allais, 2010, p.xiii).

The implications of NQFs for qualifications

Traditionally qualifications have been assigned a particular purpose, they emphasize the differences of the routes chosen for obtaining qualifications and are linked to sector or institution specific contexts, contents and assessment. Eventually they are connected to providing institutions of the different sectors and rooted in the trust given to those institutions (Young, 2005, p.15)

Within national qualifications frameworks qualifications are based on principles of commonality or equivalency of different qualifications, they establish links between e.g. between the vocational training sector and higher education. Moreover qualifications are determined by outcomes and standards and distributed across a number of qualification levels in hierarchical order (Ibid., p.8). In an NQF qualifications are designed to: ideally be portable, meaning they are applicable for another kind of qualification; consist of units and credits, hence they can be acquired over time by accumulating the necessary credits; increase transparency as (a) they provide information for learners on what they are to learn and (b) are described in terms of a single set of criteria or definition; be classified in terms of occupational fields; be described in terms of learning outcomes, independently from the provision itself and not based on specific prior learning (Ibid., p.9).

Competence

The Oxford Dictionary (2011) [online] gives the following definition of the noun competence:

- the ability to do something successfully or efficiently

However there seems to be no common understanding of competence in literature and research. As with qualification, it is thought of differently according to the socio-cultural setting and the function attributed to it. However, the concept of competence is generally used when any sort of performance is to be measured.

Along with competence the terms 'competency', 'competences' or 'competencies' can be found in Anglophone literature as well. Although the Oxford Dictionary's definition of competence is valid for competency, too, some authors distinguish the two terms. For instance Moore, Cheng and Dainty (2004, pp.315-316) cite Armstrong's (1998) differentiation of

competence as "what people need to be able to do to perform a job well" and competency as "those dimensions of behaviour lying behind competent performance".

A similar tendency arose from the debate about competence in connection to the introduction of NVQs in the United Kingdom. It was realized that competence within a qualifications framework needs to be a more generic concept that comprises knowledge and understanding as performance alone is too simplistic and context-specific (Hyland, 1993, pp.59-60)[4].

As a working definition in this thesis it is suggested that the dictionary definition of competence as "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently" be amended by "having acquired the relevant knowledge and understanding". That means that competence is observable or measurable in the moment it is needed for an activity: knowledge is converted into acting appropriately and self organized. Hence knowledge is converted into understanding. Of course personal characteristics play a role, too. Competence is governed by personal norms and values.

According to the definitions above the illustration below suggests a linear relation between knowledge, ability, skills and qualification and between qualification and competence. Ability, skills and knowledge are the necessary prerequisites to obtain a qualification. Obtaining a qualification does not necessitate competence. But being competent is not possible without a qualification and thus not without knowledge, ability and skills.

Outcomes-based education

Literature (for instance Killen, 2000) identifies three general angles from which the nature of an educational system can be determined. A system based on inputs is focused on infrastructure, resources and the financial aspects. Quality and value of the system are measured economically. Secondly, if attention is above all paid to what takes place within the system, the focus lies on the delivery, organization and governance of education. Finally if the interest is in results or products of education, the outcomes from the system matter mostly (Killen, 2000, p.1).

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[4] Nonetheless it is not clear what competence statements really do and the question is how knowledge and understanding can be related to competence without picking out only the knowledge that is directly linked to a certain competence.

Outcomes in education are originally linked to behaviorist theory. The 'behavioral objectives' movement around Robert Mager in the United States during the 1960s and 70s can be seen as the outset of outcomes-based approaches in the context of education. Objectives in that context are indicators for the behavior a learner[5] would need to show as prove for learning. Hence the outcomes of learning were thought to be observable performances. Mager suggested writing precise statements -'instructional objectives'- about these observable outcomes to be able to define the type of learning that would occur and to develop the assessment of it (Kennedy, Hyland and Ryan, 2002, p.3).

The outset for an increasing interest in outcomes is the 1990s. In 1994, William G. Spady - maybe the most known advocate of OBE- published "Outcomes-based education. Critical issues and answers" as the answer to a perceived need for educational reform in the United States. His work was also intended to serve as a guide to OBE for teachers and trainers. Brandt names some of the issues that concerned education stakeholders at the time: massive technological, economic and social changes, the challenge to boost student performance substantially and the pressure to make [educational] organizations more responsive and efficient (Brandt, in: Spady, 1994, p.iii).

Spady (1994) himself points out three major phenomena that contribute[d] to the rethinking of education and to the interest in outcomes: the change from the industrial to the information age and rapid technological advancement, demographic change, intense changes of society and state in terms of multiculturalism, globalization and so forth (p.29). Killen (2000) also mentions a growing demand for accountability of educational systems (p.1).

What is outcomes-based education?

Spady defines OBE as

> "[…] clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens" (Spady, 1994, p.1)

Accordingly the *paradigm* of OBE is "what and whether students learn successfully is more important than when and how they learn something" (Spady, 1994, p.8).

The core of OBE is to define a clear statement of what students are to learn. That means that one needs to decide which outcomes are the most significant or important. This obviously is

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[5] For convenience 'learner' and 'student' will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

not an easy task and the question is who determines what is most significant. Also it reflects the underlying behaviorist nature of this approach as "specifying exactly what is to be achieved and measured is, […], nothing more than reconstituted behaviourism […]" (Hyland, 1993, p.58).

What are outcomes in OBE and how are they different from learning outcomes in NQFs? For Spady outcomes are linked to observable actions or the demonstration of knowledge like explaining or producing. The outcome of a learning process is not mere knowing but applying or more precisely *utilizing* knowledge actively (Spady, 1994, p.2). The problem involved with this is that "observable parts of tasks describe neither their complete nor even their most significant elements" (Moss, 1981, cited in: Hyland, 1993, p.59). Spady's rather performance-based approach to outcomes distinguishes itself from learning outcomes in NQFs insofar as the latter often include mental processes such as 'knowing' or 'understanding' [see below]. Outcomes-based education rests on three assumptions, or premises which mirror the rationale of this education concept. The first one acknowledges that students have different styles and rates of learning: "all students can learn and succeed, but not all in the same time or in the same way". Secondly the prerequisite for students' success is prior success: "successful learning promotes even more successful learning" and finally "schools and teachers control the conditions that determine whether or not students are successful at school learning" (Spady, 1994, pp.9-10).

Derived from these assumptions are the two purposes of OBE: It has to be ensured that all students are equipped with the knowledge, competence, and qualities they need to be successful when they finish their education. And schools need to be structured in a way that outcomes can be achieved by and maximized for all students (Ibid., p.9).

According to Spady the keys for OBE to succeed are:

- developing a clear set of learning outcomes around which all of the systems components can be focused
- establishing the conditions and opportunities within the system that enable and encourage all students to achieve those essential outcomes (Ibid., pp.1-2)

Linked to these keys he identifies four basic principles (Ibid., p.10) of OBE:

- *"Clarity of focus"*: teaching personnel needs to clarify what their students have to learn and what they do needs to help students be successful in achieving the outcomes

- *"Designing back"*: outcomes determine all teaching, planning and assessment. Essential parts for the learning process towards outcomes are traced back from the outcomes.
- *"High expectations"*: teaching personnel must have high expectations of their students. Standards must be high and challenging to encourage students to perform well. Students are responsible for trying to achieve these standards.
- *"Expanded opportunities"*: even if students learn differently and at a different rate, if they have the enabling environment or opportunities all will succeed.

As a student centered approach OBE assumes that *all* students can be equally successful. Traditionally students need to learn a predetermined content in a fixed amount of time within a predefined curriculum. OBE tries to take into account that each student learns at a different rate. Hence if an educational system is usually defined and shaped by the calendar and by time [length of a lesson, holidays and so forth] OBE prioritizes results, accomplishments by learners, purposes and ends of learning and all decision making is influenced by these priorities (Ibid., p.3).

There are some more distinctive characteristics of OBE. For instance teaching is seen as a means to help learners learn and learning incorporates to gather and understand information and to convert it into one's own knowledge. Also the assessment of learning should aim exclusively at helping students learn. Thus teachers are facilitators, or moderators and responsible for the assessment of learners' progress. OBE follows an integrative concept for usually separate subjects or fields of study. It is thought that all subjects can be geared towards certain long-term outcomes if they are designed as key learning areas (Killen, 2000, p.10, p.18, pp.12-13).

Summing up this part some major distinctive features of OBE are pointed out again: OBE systems are based on a clearly defined framework of outcomes. In an OBE system time is used as a flexible resource that depends on students' and teachers' needs. OBE uses known and clearly defined standards. The focus of OBE lies on maximizing students' success and improve their learning and performance abilities (Spady, 1994, pp.7-8).

This brief introduction only refers to the most important aspects of outcomes-based education. For a thorough insight to OBE refer to Spady (1994) or the comprehensive working paper by Killen (2000).

Are there examples of OBE in Africa?

Naturally the debate about OBE was not limited to the United States. There were local responses to it in other Anglophone countries such as Australia, New Zealand or Canada. The origins of OBE in Africa evolved from this debate and post-apartheid South Africa [1994 onwards] was the first state to base educational reform on outcomes. The introduction of outcomes to education in South Africa was not only preceded by a global discourse. It was also initiated by local protagonists, above all the labor movement, represented by the South African National Training Board and the labor union. The debate within the labor movement, which was characterized by a narrow understanding of competences, resulted in policy borrowing of the OBE approach and competences were renamed outcomes. The debate as such arose mainly out of concerns of workers for the improvement of skills provision and the accreditation of skills obtained outside formal education[6]. Hence in the beginning the main focus of OBE was on labor and the training sector. The adoption of an outcomes-based qualification system was not uncontested as some saw OBE as a manifestation of western cultural imperialism (Cross et al., 2002, p. 176, p.180).

Another, maybe *the* most influential factor was the wish to overhaul the entire education system which was thought to be corrupted by apartheid structures and theory and thus not fit to meet the needs of a desegregated and newly democratic state (Allais, 2007, p.529).

The shift to OBE was official in 1997 when the so called 'Curriculum 2005' (C2005) was adopted for South African education. A part of the new outcomes-based curriculum was an integrated approach to education and training which was previously called for by the labor movement. Through the South African NQF the necessary integrated framework for the shift from "*disciplinary*" to "*interdisciplinary*" knowledge was already in place (Cross et al., 2002, p.179).

What are the key features of Curriculum 2005? Traditional subjects such as mathematics or languages are grouped into eight learning areas. C2005 is based on "*critical outcomes*" which are cross-curricular outcomes to enhance further integration of learning areas. The eight learning areas are complemented by sixty-six learning outcomes. "*Assessment criteria*" are based on observable and demonstrable results of learning processes to measure a learner's achievement. "*Range statements*" give information about the depth and complexity of

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[6] This was particularly important for the African population who had been discriminated against and disadvantaged in education during apartheid.

learners' achievement. Associated with C2005 are activities that are geared towards the achievement of specific outcomes called "*learning programs*" (Ibid.).

The introduction of Curriculum 2005 brought about several problems, mostly related to its actual implementation. Curriculum 2005 represents a very narrow conception of outcomes and pedagogical purpose and the consequences of the integration of education and training in practice were unclear. In order to implement a curriculum teachers need to be trained accordingly and learning materials have to be chosen or developed, but since C2005 was a somewhat ad hoc change to education practice the preconditions above could not be met. Due to apartheid, schooling alone suffered from limited human and material resources and administration was poor (Ibid., p.181).

On the political level, while at the beginning labor and education practitioners were actively involved in the policy process of educational reform, they were increasingly excluded later on as experts and international consultants took over the curriculum design. The result was that the curriculum consisted of complex and "*inaccessible*" language and teachers were not familiar with the new terminology of OBE (Ibid.).

In 2000 a Review Committee was appointed to report on implementation, success of and difficulties with Curriculum 2005. The Committee gave several recommendations which led to the revision of C2005 in 2002. The recommendations can be found in the Committee's report[7] and they basically treat the above mentioned problems with C2005. This revision suggests that it was a modification rather than an abandonment of OBE in South Africa.

Learning outcomes

From the discipline of pedagogy, notably OBE, outcomes have received increasing attention from education policy makers and educational governance. There is a number of different working definitions for learning outcomes, e.g.

- "*'learning outcomes' means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;*" (European Council, 2008)

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[7] http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2000/21cen_curriculum.pdf [Accessed 05.08.2011]. Another noteworthy source of information on OBE in South Africa: Allais, S.M. 2007. Why the South African NQF failed: lessons for countries wanting to introduce national qualifications frameworks. *European Journal of Education*, 42 (4), pp. 523-547.

- *"Learning outcomes are best understood as a collection of useful processes and tools that can be applied in diverse ways in different policy, teaching and learning settings."* (CEDEFOP[8], 2008, p.9).
- *"A learning outcome is the particular knowledge, skill or behavior that a student is expected to exhibit after a period of study"* (World Bank, 2011)
- *"Outcomes are really no more than statements of intention, written in terms of student learning"* (Killen, 2000).

Kennedy, Hyland and Ryan (2002) collected even more definitions but more importantly they point out that all of them are very similar and that they share the focus on (a) the achievement of the learner [learner centeredness] and (b) on what a learner can do at the end of a learning session. No reference is made on *where* or *how* a learner completes his/her learning activity (pp.3-4).

It is important to mention that learning outcomes are used in different contexts and that different functions are attributed to them, accordingly how learning outcomes are identified or from where they are derived varies, too. They can be based on theory and research, they can be a result of consultancy of and negotiation with education stakeholders or they can be adapted from other systems or countries (CEDEFOP; 2008, p.30).

Considering that there seems to be no standard model of learning outcomes, no explicit definition of learning outcomes is given at this point. This means that for the case studies the understanding of learning outcomes is that of the particular context of the Mauritian and Seychellois' NQF.

In a qualifications framework learning outcomes are prominent instruments to determine unit standards and/or level descriptors within the framework and to identify the subject of an education program, course etc. Learning outcomes can but do not have to serve as the principle to organize a NQF. If they do, they naturally have an impact on an educational system's curriculum, teaching practice and assessment (Ibid., p. 10).

Learning outcomes are also a means to involve the different education stakeholders in the process of NQF development as they are sought to help identify appropriate learning outcomes (Ibid.).

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[8] European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

An example of a learning outcome in a national qualifications framework would be the following level descriptor at the primary level of the Seychellois' NQF: "Acquire basic, broad-based knowledge and skills (operational literacy in terms of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) and develop desirable attitudes and values."(SQA, n.d., p.14). In the Mauritian National Certificate in Wood Craft at NQF level two a learning outcome would be to: "Demonstrate knowledge of different finishing techniques in woodcraft" (MQA, 2011, p.3). As can be seen in these examples, learning outcomes do not have to be equivalent to the understanding of outcomes in OBE.

Learning outcomes are sometimes also referred to as "*qualification outcomes*" (e.g. Young, Allais and Raffe, 2009) but the two terms are not used interchangeably in this thesis. It can be argued that qualification outcomes are rather close to the performance-based understanding of outcomes in OBE and that learning outcomes can have a broader scope by making a reference to attitudes and values like in the Seychellois' example.

National Qualifications Frameworks and the reform of qualifications towards outcomes

The first outcomes-based approaches linked to any sort of qualifications framework originated in the middle of the 1980s, in Anglophone countries like the United Kingdom, New Zealand or Australia. The governments in question resorted to neo-liberal education strategies due to growing dissatisfaction with the existing educational provision. High unemployment rates, especially among the younger working population and the realization that economic competitiveness had to be improved led governments to think that qualifications were not responsive enough to the market and rather linked to the interests of education providers (Young and Allais, 2009, p.18).

In Scotland the year 1984 marks the explicit outset for the specification of outcomes in vocational education via the '16+ Action Plan'; and especially in England the vocational education and training sector was characterized by a chaotic and confusing mass of qualification pathways and institutions. Inspired by ideas in the Scottish 'Action Plan' so called 'national vocational qualifications' -NVQs- where introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1987. Scotland developed its own vocational qualifications, the SVQs. NVQs led to the modularization of the VET system in the UK: Each NVQ represents a building block within a framework of qualifications, the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) (Fisch, 2005, pp.234-238, pp.245-248).

CEDEFOP states that with the NVQ framework "[o]ne of the tools introduced was functional analysis of occupations, with learning outcomes (often called competences) as one of the key elements of the methodology" (CEDEFOP; 2008, p.16).

Since the introduction of NVQs other countries have developed their own framework models that have different origins and purposes. The use of outcomes varies across the different sectors of education, not all countries use them everywhere (CEDEFOP, 2008, pp.31-32). Also the nature and extent of the shift towards outcomes depends on the goals of a country's education reform (Young and Allais, 2009, p.11). Nonetheless there are some common motivations behind the modification of qualifications towards outcomes (Young and Allais, 2009, p.7): (i) Limit the autonomy of providing institutions; (ii) increase efficiency and effectiveness by competition of providing institutions; (iii) learning outcomes as drivers for change/reform of educational provision and more flexibility; (iv) more transparency and portability of qualifications through learning outcomes.

As has been mentioned, educational reform in the first countries to introduce frameworks linked to outcomes was characterized by a general dissatisfaction with the status quo of institution based educational provision which was characterized by the interdependence of inputs and outcomes. The solution seemed to be to move to the other end of the spectrum, shifting the focus to outcomes, to the demand of the learners and qualification design is moved to government and employers (Young and Allais, 2009, p.8, p.14).

Accordingly the reform of qualifications can be described by the change from institution-based to outcomes-based types of qualification provision. Young and Allais (2009) argue that

Institution-based
- Qualifications are linked to knowledge domains and embedded in institutions
- Qualifications mediate access to knowledge in specialist domains via specialist teachers
- Institutions established trust based on tradition and experience
- Assessment via providing institution or separate body in charge for qualification and examinations
- Decisions open to learners about qualification provision are limited

Outcomes-based
- No explicit links between qualifications and awarding institutions
- Shift of power from institutions and specialists to outcome statements or qualification criteria
- Outcomes are precisely written statements that serve as an alternative to trust in institutions
- Assessment of outcomes via performance/work tasks
- More opportunities for learners to credit experiential, non-formal, informal learning
- Credit accumulation and transfer is facilitated

it is this shift that paved the way for the 'rise' of NQFs (p.8). They are seen as a means to enhance the quality of qualifications, to increase the number of learners, to give credit to prior learning through experience, non- and informal learning, to encourage lifelong learning and to increase cooperation between education providers and the labor market (Ibid., p.7). Below, the main differences between institution-based and outcomes-based qualifications provision are briefly summarized

Looking at these differences there are some apparent advantages and disadvantages to outcomes-based qualifications. On the one hand the economic importance of prior learning, [non-formal, informal and experiential learning] is recognized by facilitating its accreditation. Also learning outcomes link the different qualifications strands instead of separating them according to their institutionalized provision. This prevents institutions from limiting access to new or excluded groups of learners, trying to preserve advantage or privilege. And it facilitates qualification transfer and learner progression (Young and Allais, 2009, pp.9-11).
By involving employers in the process of defining appropriate outcomes they are more likely develop ownership of the qualifications and encourage employees to raise their qualification level (Ibid., pp.14-15).

On the other hand to separate qualifications and institutions it is vital to know how curriculum and qualifications are linked. Shifting trust from institutions to qualifications or outcomes may take away the trust of learners in the qualifications. This could result in qualifications not being valued. If outcomes statements substitute the trust basis in institutions, the necessity of precisely specifying outcomes can result in narrow and trivial qualifications. Moreover if there are no linear qualifications routes learners could end up less qualified. And the question is whether qualifications which are neither embedded in or originate from institutions still mediate between the education system and the labor market. Further the accreditation of prior learning needs considerable resources and infrastructure. If employers are to be more involved in developing qualifications it needs to be kept in mind that there is no 'one' employer view and not all want to be more involved (Ibid., pp.9-17).

The shift from institutions-based to outcomes-based qualifications in the developed countries eventually found its way to the developing world, the example of OBE in South Africa reveals as much.

1 Introduction

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) are often referred to as a 'global phenomenon' and as Young (2007) states: "NQFs, together with their international extensions, will not go away" (p.446). Hence, it seems worth to look a little more closely at this 'phenomenon'.

What is a national qualifications framework? A general working definition is provided by the 'Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development' (OECD): "A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved" (2006, cited in Tuck, 2007, p.2).

The concept of qualifications frameworks, whether national or otherwise in scope, has been greeted with much enthusiasm in literature, supposedly holding a number of benefits in store for those who decide to implement one.

Where is this fascination with NQFs rooted in? In most cases high expectations are pinned to the introduction of a framework: Many policy makers perceive national qualifications frameworks as a key driver for reform in the qualifications system, where the latter might be characterized by fragmentation, exclusion of certain groups, a lack of quality assurance or resources, uncoordinated qualification routes, a multitude of providers and awards and so forth. One policy instrument to tackle numerous problems and challenges? The enthusiasm is hardly to blame. Unfortunately and not surprisingly there is a downside to the NQF approach. Although the exercise of the mere development of NQF policy might not be challenging, its implementation might be. And of course NQFs are not a "quick-fix" solution it takes time until real impacts can be achieved.

Apparently, NQFs appeal especially to developing countries, including many in sub-Sahara Africa. This thesis[9] therefore attempts to analyze national qualifications frameworks policy in sub-Sahara Africa through selected case studies.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the conceptualization of national qualifications frameworks. Firstly the origins and purposes of NQFs are outlined.

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[9] Note that all references in this thesis made are in accordance with the 'Guide to the Harvard Style of Referencing' issued by the Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge and Chelmsford library, valid as of September 2010. This thesis is written in American English except when directly quoting from literature in British English.

Then the particular case of NQFs in developing countries is discussed. A look is also taken at some examples of NQFs in Africa. To conclude the first section information is given on the proposed transnational framework for the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Section 2 is dedicated to the case studies, Mauritius and Seychelles. Prior to outlining the respective NQF policy of the two countries, the stage is set by providing some historical background information and selected socio-economic facts as well as a description of the educational system. The core information in regard to NQF policy in Seychelles and Mauritius will comprise the starting points and circumstances of NQF development, the reasons for the introduction, policy aims, identification of stakeholders and the approaches to implementation, governance and design of the NQF.

As with any research there are certain constraints placed upon this thesis. No fieldwork can be conducted hence information is gathered from existing research and official documents as well as websites. Further, sources of information for the case studies vary and may differ in scope and volume, therefore the information given in the case studies cannot be identical.

Research on NQFs in the sub-Saharan region up to now has largely focused on South Africa. The reason for this particular focus is South Africa's status as one of the 'early starters' regarding NQFs and the extraordinary circumstances of post-apartheid educational reforms under which the South African NQF was developed and introduced in the mid-nineties of the last century. Further, South Africa has been identified as one of the, or perhaps *the* key driver for the development and introduction of NQFs in other nations in sub-Sahara Africa and for the development of a transnational qualifications framework in the Southern African Development Community[10] (SADC) (Keevy, 2006). To date there are few African states which have fully implemented an NQF and most of these NQFs are partial frameworks. Others are currently working on or considering the introduction of an NQF. The case studies are therefore chosen from the pool of states having implemented an NQF, namely Mauritius and Seychelles Both countries have comprehensive frameworks. They also share some characteristics such as population size, a colonial heritage or the status of an island state

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[10] Member states of the SADC are : Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC),Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

which eventually allow comparisons in regard to the national qualifications framework, the educational system and the people the NQF caters for.

Further, South Africa, as has been mentioned, has already been extensively discussed in [NQF] research and other NQFs in sub-Sahara Africa lack documented information and/or involve only partial frameworks. Nonetheless examples such as Botswana or Namibia are treated briefly in Section 1.

As a guiding structure for the case studies, several leading questions have been formulated:

- ***Who were the policy transfer agents?***
- ***How did the policy transfer take place?***
- ***What was transferred?***
- ***Why was the NQF introduced?***
- ***What is the legal basis of the framework?***
- ***What is the purpose of the NQF, what are the policy objectives, principles?***
- ***What are the architectural features of the NQF?***
- ***How is the NQF implemented?***
- ***What progress has been made concerning the NQF's implementation to date?***
- ***What is the impact of the NQF?***

The questions are derived from the policy transfer framework developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). Why this framework? National qualifications frameworks are above all policy instruments, implemented to bring about a number of desired changes in a country's qualifications system. Thus analyzing NQFs is analyzing policy. Secondly NQFs have been and increasingly are subject to 'policy transfer' and it is argued that the Dolowitz and Marsh framework is the most holistic approach to policy transfer.

Readers who are quite familiar with the literature on NQFs might wonder why 'policy transfer' is used at this point, as the dialectic of 'policy borrowing' or 'policy learning' and sometimes also 'policy convergence' or 'diffusion' is rather -and more commonly- inherent to NQF studies (e.g. Chrisholm, 2007, Young, Allais and Raffe, 2009, Chakroun, 2010). Additionally, two core massages can be found in most NQF studies: (i) 'the global dissemination of NQFs is a product of policy borrowing[11]' and (ii) 'it would be better if countries would rather *learn* from each other's experience instead of borrowing NQF approaches from elsewhere'. These conclusions are not contested however it appears that the picture is drawn too simplistic. This argument is picked up again later in Chapter 2.3.

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[11] The so called 'early starter countries' [Australia, United Kingdom (UK) comprising England, Wales and Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa] are said to be prominent examples of policy borrowing.

Another problem is that learning, borrowing, converging, diffusing are obviously *all* used in the context of NQFs. If this is justified by the underlying methodology in a particular case of research on NQFs it is very well. But a lot of times no further explanation or definition is given on why for instance 'diffusion' is chosen instead of 'borrowing'. It appears that the terms are sometimes used as a synonym, which is problematic and confusing as they are not the same. Therefore it seems necessary to give an introduction to policy analysis in the following chapter in order to provide some necessary essentials. The provision of these basics of policy analysis does not claim to be comprehensive in any way[12].

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[12] For an in-debth introduction to policy analysis consult e.g. Schubert, K., Bandelow, N. (Ed.): Lehrbuch der Politikfeldanalyse, Munich, 2003.

2 Methodology

2.1. Policy Analysis

Policy analysis as one of the disciplines in political sciences tries to make sense of political decision-making, taking into account institutional settings as well as socio-cultural and socio-political environments. Policy analysis also aims at identifying the different stakeholders in the policy related decision-making process. It is important to mention that the term 'stakeholders' generally goes beyond governments and their affiliated bodies by including media, the social partners, pressure groups and the like (Schubert and Bandelow, 2003, pp.1-4).

'Policy' can refer to the content of a political program (policy-output), to its result (policy-outcome) or impact (policy-impact) (Janning and Schneider 2005, p.18).

Through policy studies, policies may not only be analyzed but also be evaluated and it is thought possible to anticipate or plan political programs. Policy-making as a process is far from being linear and it usually does not show a specific point of outset or completion (Jann and Wegrich, 2003, p.81).
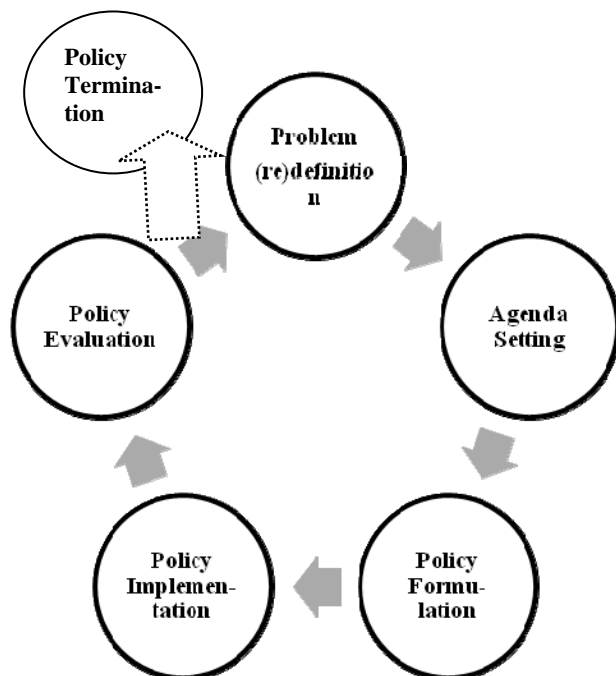
Problem definition as the first stage of the policy cycle represents the necessity of *perceiving* a nuisance and then defining it as a problem that needs to be solved. Afterwards the problem needs to be put on the political agenda. Note that there are always a number of problems and *agenda setting* describes the procedure of prioritizing certain problems over others. A number of different policy stakeholders e.g. politicians, interest groups or trade unions can be involved in problem definition or agenda setting.

Illustration 1: The Policy Cycle, adapted from Jann and Wegrich, 2003.

Nonetheless, there are several models to illustrate the different phases of a policy process. One of them is the so called 'policy cycle'. 'Cycle' already suggests the infinite process of policy-making and the model has proven to be very helpful in showing what is being researched by policy analysts. The phases or stages of the cycle should not be understood as separate entities but as interdependent.

As a next step policy formulation transforms a problem on the agenda into a political program. For policy implementation, the political program is handed to the institutions or organizations in charge. The impact and success of a program should be evaluated either by an administrative body or by policy stakeholders within the political arena. Policy evaluation can lead to policy termination or to the redefinition of a problem and evaluation, sometimes rather subtle, takes place all the time as governmental programs change, are revised or abandoned. A policy analysis can include all of the stages of the cycle or it might be limited to one or several stages (Jann and Wegrich, 2003, pp. 83-93).

To facilitate the analytical process, it is possible to divide the policy spectrum into different sectors or fields, e.g. economics, health or environment (Janning and Schneider, 2005, p.16). Naturally, a nation's policy fields are not isolated. Within policy studies, there is evidence of a growing internationalization of policy fields, above all in regulatory politics. Regulations are increasingly influenced by international co-operation, international contracts or supranational organizations to name a few (Janning, 2006).

Thus, an internationalization of policy fields is rooted in the context of globalization. In this thesis globalization refers to the increasing transnational integration of nations economically and politically, to increased cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and to the growth of communications across the globe13.

How are processes of internationalization analyzed in policy studies? The approaches most commonly used in policy analysis are policy convergence, policy diffusion and policy transfer. The next section gives an insight to these approaches, finally introducing the concept of policy transfer which will be drawn on later in the context of national qualifications frameworks.

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[13] My definition.

2.2 Policy convergence, policy diffusion and policy transfer

Three approaches emerged in the discipline of comparative policy analysis to make sense of the internationalization of policy fields. Although the focus of studies on policy convergence, diffusion and transfer varies, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p.5) point out that

> *"[…] all of these studies are concerned with the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system."*

It is not always obvious that national policies are a result of transfer, diffusion or convergence therefore studies on the subject can be very detailed and are often limited to one or two countries. The 'political system' to which Dolowitz and Marsh refer does not necessarily involve two or more countries since policy convergence, diffusion and transfer can also occur on the sub-national level, e.g. within federal structures (Holzinger et al., 2007).

2.2.1 Policy convergence

Policy convergence refers to the fact that policies "[…] grow more alike, in the form of increasing similarity in structures, processes, and performances" (Drezner, 2001, p.53 cited in: Holzinger et al., 2007, p.11). Narrowly defined studies on policy convergence look for an increase or decrease of similarity between national policies over time. Hence, 'similarity of policies' would be the dependent variable. Here, the focus of a policy analysis -on a macro-level- is the policy itself or the result of a policy process (Holzinger et al., 2007, p.17). Further questions that need to be answered are: In what direction do policies converge? How many policies converge? And internationally: How many countries are involved? In social science, convergence is measured via four statistical units[14] (Ibid., 2007, p.18):

- beta (β): countries that lagged behind a policy development manage to catch up
- gamma (γ) represents a change in the ranking of a country's performance in regard to certain policies
- delta (δ) describes the change of the distance between a desirable policy model of one country and the policy status of another country
- sigma (σ) shows the increase in similarity of policies over time

In research policy convergence is also applied as an umbrella term. In that case convergence becomes a more general term for an increasing similarity on the social, political and economic level and includes the *international* determinants of policy convergence, namely

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[14] Janning (2006) adds the unit alpha (α): a decrease in the variety of policies.

policy diffusion and policy transfer. Holzinger et al. (2007, p.12 and pp.25-28) identify several causes and mechanisms for policy international convergence in that general sense[15]:

(i) [International] policy convergence can be a result of similar but independent national reactions to comparable socio-economic or ecologic conditions; nations may resort to similar solutions. (ii) Via transnational communication and exchange of information successful policies inspire others to policy learning or lead to policy imitation. Transnational communication can be bilateral or take place in transnational networks or in international organizations. (iii) International or supranational organizations/institutions can advocate or enforce policy convergence. Here, policy convergence is a result of international harmonization which is based on international or supranational law frameworks. (iv) Policy convergence can be tied to economical or political conditionality imposed on nations by e.g. internationally operating finance institutions. (v) [International] policy convergence can be a result of economic pressures or competitiveness.

The next sections outline more specifically the causal mechanisms for policy diffusion and policy transfer. Although policy convergence as a term sometimes comprises transfer and diffusion, the three concepts should not be used interchangeably since their research focus differs and because of their causal relations to each other: transfer and diffusion can be processes that, under certain circumstances, may lead to policy convergence. But convergence is not necessarily a product of diffusion or transfer (Holzinger et al., 2007, p.16).

However, there are some core questions that are valid for all three strands of international policy research: What are the reasons for international policy convergence? Which mechanisms drive international policy convergence? How can the processes of international policy convergence be characterized? (Holzinger et al., 2007, p.12).

2.2.2 Policy diffusion

Policy diffusion studies aim at understanding how policies, programs and ideas diffuse within a larger group of countries or within political entities at the sub-national level. Their focus lies on the process of diffusion rather than on the result of it, put differently diffusion is seen as a process rather than an outcome. The dependent variable is the sequence or rate of diffusion. (Holzinger et al., 2007, p.14, p.17, Braun et al., p.40).

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[15] Here, 'international policy convergence' refers to policy convergence, diffusion and transfer.

As Stone (2000) argues, diffusion studies focus either on the macro or micro level, the former seek to describe the way policies are spread by including geographic characteristics, the system design and local policy-making of a country as explanations (p.4).

Policy literature differentiates between two understandings of diffusion: the first and wider definition includes all forms of spreading of policies or innovations internationally and includes all possible causes for diffusion as a general process. The second and narrower definition treats the diffusion of a policy as one among a number of explanations for the adoption of an innovation internationally. It emphasizes a voluntary momentum and singles out several diffusion mechanisms. Braun et al. (2007) elaborate on:

- "Learning": obtaining information from available examples to be able to redefine beliefs about a policy;
- "competition" is related to economic activity;
- "common norms", which developed through similar socialization and a common understanding of behaviors, standards etc. can lead to the same solutions to a problem;
- "taken-for-grantedness" refers to policies that are not questioned and thought of appropriate or essential such as the right to vote or the freedom of speech;
- "symbolic imitation": Policies serve as an instrument to legitimize political actions (pp.42-44).

These mechanisms are often combined with each other as explanatory factors and it should be stressed that there are usually multiple causes for diffusion processes and they might be very complex. Braun et al. (2007) criticize that there is no theoretical framework supporting these explanations (pp.44-45).

2.2.3 Policy transfer

A growing phenomenon is the transnational im- and export of innovative and/or successful policies, generally referred to as policy transfer (Janning, 2006).

The focus of transfer studies lies at the micro level, hence on institutions and stakeholders who are involved in facilitating or avoiding transfer. The dependent variables are the policy content that is transferred, e.g. programs or institutions, and the process of transfer itself (Holzinger et al., 2007, p.14). Notably Dolowitz and Marsh contributed to a more systematic approach to policy transfer within research. In their review of policy transfer literature (1996) they identify several key questions which they later integrate in a *policy framework* (2000). The framework also includes the degrees of and the constraints to transfer. Key questions, degrees and constraints will be treated in this section in order to give a thorough introduction

to policy transfer, starting with the four conceptual questions. An illustration of the entire framework can be found in the Annex.

Why policy transfer?

As with policy convergence, the reasons for transfer can range on a "continuum" [see Illustration 2] between strategic decisions and imposition: Transfer can be voluntary based on rational choice; it can be coercive or a mixture of both. The policy framework distinguishes between several kinds of lesson drawing and direct imposition (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.9). Lesson-drawing means that political decision makers look for policy solutions or innovations elsewhere in order to draw lessons and benefit from cross-national experiences and apply them to their system. Countries may resort to foreign policy models in order to substitute a policy which no longer fits the system, because of the perceived need to legitimize domestic political decisions, because of competition between political parties or due to international collaboration (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, pp.346-347). Lesson-drawing can be a perfectly rational decision but there have been few examples. More often the rationality is 'bounded'. Bounded refers to the fact that policy makers act with limited information on the transferred policy or that the situation which necessitates transfer is not accurately assessed (Dolowitz and Marsch, 2000, p.14).

Often external factors such as an international consensus about a problem or a solution, [economic] pressures, conditions e.g. for loans, or obligations e.g. in supranational organizations result in policy transfer and limit the degree of voluntarism because of a perceived necessity to act. These externalities can be caused by the interdependence of countries due to global integration (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000 p.9, and 1996, pp.348-349).

Coercive transfer on the other end of the continuum is achieved through direct imposition. In that case, pressures on policy makers come from interest groups, policy experts or political parties. Also, supranational organizations or international corporations can impose the transfer of a policy (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000 p.9 and 1996, p. 348).
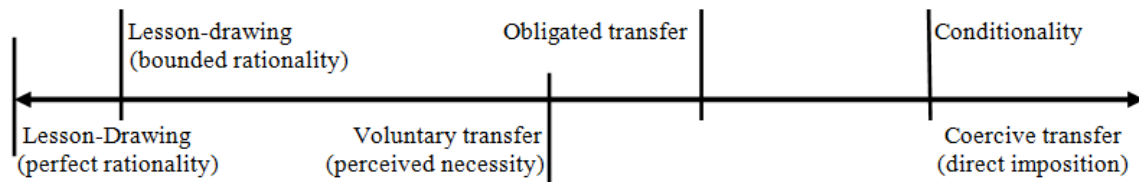
Illustration 2: The policy transfer continuum, adapted from Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000.

To be able to place a transfer process on the continuum it is vital to know not only what is transferred but also who is involved in a particular case of policy transfer. Different stakeholders have different opinions and motivations and accordingly that leads to different policies or policy programs.

Who is involved in transfer?

Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) first indentified six main categories of stakeholders or 'transfer agents' who are involved in policy transfer. However, for this thesis their later list of nine categories has been chosen because it is more detailed. Most of them can be classified[16] into two main groups, the state and non-state entities. State entities are elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats and civil servants and (national and supranational) governmental organizations (GOs); obviously, parastatals are not directly state entities but are included in the category. Non-state entities are pressure groups, consultants, (national and supranational) non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Transnational corporations, think tanks, policy entrepreneurs and experts can be connected to either group as is illustrated in the diagram below. Policy transfer is also a multi-organizational process due to the interdependence of the stakeholders. Naturally not all stakeholders are always involved or involved at the same stage of policy-making.

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[16] My classification.

Illustration 3: Classification of policy transfer agents

The role of some stakeholders should be explained at this point. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) point out that most categories of policy agents provoke voluntary or coercive transfer and that their roles often change over time (pp.11-12).

Supranational governmental organizations, e.g. the European Union (EU) or international organizations like the World Bank can be agents of voluntary *or* coercive transfer depending on their regulatory powers. The European Union for example does not *impose* NQFs on its member states but 'invites' them to develop a NQF to facilitate the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (European Union, 2010, p.4).

The World Bank on the other hand ties its loans to certain conditions like the implementation of an economic policy (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, p.348).

Sometimes stakeholders form 'policy networks' in which e.g. NGOs and policy entrepreneurs come together with government to exchange resources such as expertise, information or knowledge. As Stone (2000) states:

> *"A key feature of a network is a shared problem on which there is an exchange of information, debate, disagreement, persuasion and a search for solution and appropriate policy responses."* (p.14).

Further, consultants -representing a commercialized way of providing advice to policy makers- play an important role as they often promote policy models based on 'best practice' examples from elsewhere and therefore directly or indirectly advocate policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.10). With an increasing privatization of parts of the [global] economy, transnational corporations also gain influence in policy-making, e.g. for regulatory standards (Stone, 2000, p.18).

What is transferred?

When it comes to the question about what is transferred in policy transfer, it is important to mention that the answer is not simply 'policy'. Firstly, there needs to be a subdivision within the term 'policy' as it can have different facets such as policy goals, policy content, policy structure or policy instruments. Policy instruments can be institutions or administrative techniques. Policies are based on ideas, attitudes, concepts or ideologies which all can be transferred, too. And of course, lessons can be drawn from the failure of a policy; hence negative lessons can be transferred. Secondly, there needs to be a differentiation between 'policy' and 'program'. Programs represent the specific actions taken to implement a policy which can consist of several programs (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, p.350 and 2000, p. 12).

From where are policies transferred?

As has been mentioned before, there is evidence for increasing transnational policy transfer. However this is only one direction of transfer since it can as well occur on a sub-national level. If a country perceives the need to develop a new policy, one possibility to find a solution is to look into the national or international past. The past provides policy makers with lessons on what has previously worked out and what did not. Sometimes policies of the past are therefore re-articulated which may also cause problems as past and current situations are not identical and subject to interpretation (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, pp.352-352 and 2000, p.12).

Policy makers can also resort to other levels of their own administrative and political system if there are similar sub-national governmental entities e.g. state, regional, or city governments. Therefore, policies can be transferred from a local level or the national level. If national routines fail to provide policy solutions the cross-national level can be drawn from. Sometimes another country provides a policy model that rather fits the other country's needs. In the case of international policy transfer geographic proximity is not as important as comparable cultural, social, economic and political features:

> *"When drawing lessons across nations, geographic propinquity does not equate with policy transfer because ideological and resource similarities are necessary preconditions to adopt lessons from one country to another and neighboring countries might not always meet these preconditions."* (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, p.353)

The statement above also indirectly mentions some of the problems that countries may encounter when transferring a foreign policy.

Degrees of policy transfer

Processes of policy transfer do not all follow the same pattern. Neither does policy transfer refer to the mere copying of policies. As well as reasons for transfer and the agents of policy transfer vary, there are varying gradations of policy transfer.

When policy makers begin to look for a policy program they have a number of options. If a fast and cheap solution is needed they might resort to *copying* a policy: They adopt a program without any changes. This direct and complete transfer is also referred to as 'quick-fix' (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.13).

Another degree, namely *emulation*, involves the adaptation of the ideas behind a program. The tools and structures of a policy approach from elsewhere are then shaped to comply with the local conditions (Stone, 2000, p.6).

Or else, policy makers can be inspired by a policy innovation or by best practice. *Inspiration* usually results in a different policy outcome compared to the original policy. In a few cases transferred policies are a *mixture* of several (national or international) programs (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.13). Some literature (e.g. Rose, 1993) uses the terms *hybridization* or *synthesis* instead of mixtures.

Policy borrowing and policy learning are not genuine degrees of transfer and thus are not included in the Dolowitz and Marsh policy transfer framework. Rather they are concepts on the periphery of policy transfer and should be seen as a specificity of it.

Policy borrowing

Phillips and Ochs (2003) published a paper on policy borrowing [in education] which to date is the most comprehensive. They identify four stages of policy borrowing, the first one being "cross-national attraction", the second "decision", the third "implementation" and the fourth "internalization" or "indigenization" (pp.451-452).

"Cross-national attraction" means identifying features of foreign policy models that can be borrowed. There are certain impulses or triggers that lead to policy borrowing, for instance the dissatisfaction with or negative evaluation of a current policy, economic changes, knowledge innovation and so forth.

According to Phillips and Ochs (2003) a policy contains six foci of attraction: The first one is the "guiding philosophy/ideology", the second "ambitions/goals", number three are the "strategies", the fourth focus is on the "enabling structures", the fifth on the "processes" and the sixth on "techniques" (p.453).

With these foci policy makers try to find out ['externalize'] the potential of the policies they seek to borrow or put differently: they need to determine whether a policy is borrowable.

The second stage, "decision", describes the measures a government takes to start the process of policy change. Decisions can be categorized according to several descriptors such as 'theoretical', 'realistic'/'practical', 'phoney' or 'quick-fix' (Ibid., pp.453-455).

The third step would be the "implementation" of the borrowed policy. Here Phillips and Ochs include the preconditions and the context for the adaptation of the policy as well as the influence of significant stakeholders within the policy process. Finally, after the policy is implemented it becomes part of the system of the country that has borrowed it: it is "internalized" or "indigenized" (Ibid., p.456).

Policy learning

Compared to policy borrowing and to the different degrees of policy transfer, learning from foreign policies is a different process.

> *"Learning occurs when policy-makers adjust their cognitive understanding of policy development and modify policy in the light of knowledge gained from past policy experience" (Stone, 2000, p.10).*

Hence, policy learning affects the very beliefs and ideas behind a policy, the behavioral and cognitive state of being of policy-makers and it is therefore a distinct approach. The emphasis lies also on capacity building for the development of policies based on previous policy experience.

Chakroun (2010) points out two dimensions of policy learning. The first and individual dimension includes peer learning and assumes that policy stakeholders improve their expertise through policy learning; the structure and mechanisms of policy development as possible areas for learning make up the second dimension (p.205).

There are three degrees, or as Stone (2000) puts it, "orders" of policy learning (p.10). The first and second degree are part of general policy-making, thus occurs frequently. First degree

learning refers to minor changes in policy settings or for policy instruments. Some experimentation and the willingness to implement new policy techniques are a sign for second degree learning. If there is a radical adjustment of policy instruments or within the ideological framework behind a policy, then third degree learning has occurred (Ibid., pp.10-11).

Where does learning take place? Usually policy makers belong to policy networks or communities which can be regional, national, supranational or global in scope. Networks and/or communities provide the enabling environment for the exchange of experiences and the sharing of ideas and facilitate learning processes. Nonetheless learning is often uneven as some stakeholders act as knowledge providers and others primarily as knowledge seekers (Ibid., p.13).

Policy transfer- constraints and failure

If policy transfer is based on lesson drawing and on deliberate choice, policy stakeholders usually assume that what they transfer will be as successful in their case, as has it been in the 'lender's'. But that does not always hold true. Obviously there are some factors that not only have an influence on a policy transfer process, they are even constraints.

Holzinger et al. (2007) classify constraining factors in two groups. The first one includes the economic, institutional and socio-cultural character of a country e.g.: (i) Language: Countries that have a language in common may not face difficulties in policy transfer because information can be easily shared and policy documents are easily understood. (ii) [Socio-] Economic, socio-cultural features of a country: Ideological similarities between the countries involved can facilitate policy transfer. (iii) Political parties: The willingness to transfer may depend on the constitution or 'couleur' of the government (pp.30-31).

The second group is made up of the specific features of the policy that is to be transferred. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) explain in more detail several frequent constraints on policy transfer: (i) "Policy complexity": The more complex a policy is, the harder it will be to transfer it. (ii) "Past policies": Policies of the past influence the decisions of policy stakeholders on what can be transferred. (iii) "Structural and institutional feasibility": A state's political and administrative structure can be a hindrance to policy transfer. It is also crucial that a country has the bureaucratic, economic, technologic etc. means at hand which are necessary for transfer (p.353).

If a policy transfer is not thoroughly thought through, if constraining factors are not considered, policy transfer is likely to fail. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) categorize three kinds of policy failure. "Uninformed transfer" refers to a lack of analysis of a policy, its programs/institutions which results in insufficient information about how the policy works [successfully]. "Incomplete transfer" occurs when a policy is transferred and implemented without some of the corresponding elements, e.g. institutions, which are crucial to its success. Finally, in the case of "inappropriate transfer" a policy might fail because the cultural, political or economic conditions of the transferring country are too different from the conditions in the exporting country (pp.17-18).

2.3 National qualifications frameworks and 'borrowing' and 'learning'

As to how a national qualifications framework development is best analyzed there is no standard practice. However, the concept of the Dolowitz and Marsh policy transfer framework provides a useful methodological structure for the analysis of NQFs emphasizing that it is important to consider the 'why, who, what, from where and how' while analyzing policy.

Although NQFs are commonly seen as a product of policy borrowing, it is argued that policy transfer is a more accurate term: It has been pointed out above, that borrowing is rather a specificity of transfer. It should also be obvious that not all NQFs can be the result of a borrowed policy as certainly some frameworks are imposed e.g. due to conditionality of supranational organizations.

Further, the differences between policy convergence, diffusion and transfer [borrowing] have been outlined. This underpins the argument that these concepts should not be used interchangingly in regard to national qualifications framework development.

It has already been mentioned that most literature argues for policy learning when it comes to NQF development. However it is not specified how policy learning would manifest itself in connection to NQFs. Learning is, above all, a cognitive process as has been outlined above and there is no criteria yet, to measure that learning occurred in NQF policy.

For instance, is making adjustments on a framework's scope or design after its implementation policy learning, because it was realized that the original model was flawed?

Does this realization account for a cognitive change? If so, than South Africa would be an example but has not been explicitly labeled as one.

Even if policy contents or policy instruments such as Qualifications Authorities are transferred, it is argued that most countries developed and implemented a qualifications framework that caters for their individual needs. Is this then policy learning because it was realized that a NQF model from elsewhere does not necessarily work out for the domestic context? If so, then learning is particularly the case in sub-Sahara Africa, as can be seen in the examples outlined in Section 1. This would also mean that the frequent calls for policy learning in literature are somewhat superfluous as policy learning already takes place.

Or is policy learning the realization that there are alternatives to NQFs, despite the pressure from donors, from consultants, from the perceived need to 'jump on the NQF bandwagon' in order not to be left out of a global development?

It seems that the question on how to determine policy learning in connection to NQFs cannot satisfactorily be answered at this point and is left for future research.

Section 1: Conceptualization

3 National qualifications frameworks

The purpose of this Section is to give some general information about national qualifications frameworks and to underpin this information with some examples. Due to the restriction of the volume of this thesis it cannot be the intention to develop a comprehensive typological overview nor to thoroughly discuss all facts.

3.1 Origins

According to Young (2007) national qualifications frameworks "[...] are [...] one expression of the twin processes of *moderisation* and *globalization* [author's italics]." or in fact a result of "[...] greater mobility of labour" and of "[...] growing internationalization of educational provision [...]" (p. 446).

Keevy, Chakroun and Deij (2010) date the outset of these twin processes at the end of the 20th century, when the hitherto existing qualifications system [at least in most of the western hemisphere] was no longer perceived as fit for future demands and as complicit in maintaining the inequalities the system produced (p.5). These inequalities, so it can be concluded from the contemporary discourse about qualifications, were manifest above all in the separation of vocational and academic qualification routes (Ibid., 2010, p.5).

A consequence of this discourse was the quest for a different approach to education and training. This gave way to the development of outcomes-based qualifications for the VET sector and of the respective NVQ frameworks in Scotland and in other parts of the UK in the 1980s. From the late 1990s other countries started to jump on the qualifications framework bandwagon. These frameworks responded mainly to national situations and some of them focused on VET, like in the Caribbean or in Latin America (Ibid., p.5, Allais, 2010, p.18). Besides the UK examples, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and France belong to the first generation of countries to introduce national qualifications frameworks while the 'genuine' NQF model was systemized first by Australia (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.5).

These 'first generation NQFs' have triggered the emergence of more frameworks across the globe. From 2005, countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in Europe [2008] introduced or consider NQFs and/or regional or transnational qualifications frameworks. An example for the latter is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) or the framework for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Currently more framework initiatives can be found for instance in the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Island countries (Allais, 2010, p. 19). A timeline illustrating global NQF development until 2009 can be found in the Annex.

The number of presently existing frameworks in their different forms varies in literature. In 2009 the International Labour Organization (ILO) stated there were "[…] some 70 countries […] in the process of developing or implementing some kind of a qualifications framework. " In 2010, Allais found a

> "dramatic increase in the number of countries adopting NQFs, with over 100 countries now implementing, or developing, or considering NQFs, or involved in regional qualifications frameworks." (p.1)

3.2 Types of frameworks

It is important to stress that there is no single model of a national qualifications framework. Based on evidence from framework examples there are four major categories of distinction for qualifications frameworks (Young, 2005, pp.12-14).

Frameworks of communication and regulatory frameworks

This category is concerned with the purpose of a framework. Qualifications frameworks commonly are a tool to facilitate communication in terms of available qualifications: They are a register or map of qualifications which can be used by learners and providers as a guide to navigate through qualification options and pathways. Because of this guiding role, QFs are also referred to as 'enabling frameworks'. Further, these types of frameworks are less prescriptive, often rely on voluntary compliance and are less complicated in their implementation. On the other hand of course, a framework's use is also limited in that case. Examples for rather communication based frameworks are the Australian or the Scottish NQF (Ibid., p.12).

On the other end of the continuum there are frameworks which act as an instrument for accountability in being a regulator for qualifications. An example would be the NVQ

framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland through which initially the separation of outcomes from inputs and institutions was emphasized (Young, 2007, p.449, p. 451).

Weak and strong frameworks

There are goals assigned to every framework. This category refers to the capacity of a framework to achieve these goals. Therefore the difference is made between 'strong' and 'weak' frameworks. A framework is strong if it is based on strict requirements for qualifications to be registered on the framework and weak if these requirements are less strict. Weak frameworks are also referred to as 'loose' frameworks (Young, 2005, p.13).

Partial and comprehensive frameworks

Depending on their purpose, qualifications frameworks differ in scope. Put differently the scope of a framework is its 'degree of comprehensiveness'. Scope can be measured for the type of qualification for example occupational qualifications in VET, the level of qualification e.g. a Bachelor degree or the qualification sector. In the latter case a framework can be limited to a specific sector, often VET (Young, 2005, p.13). Another dimension in this category is the level for which the QF is valid and which can be national, regional or transnational.

Unit-based and qualification-based frameworks

This distinction refers to the manner of registration of qualifications on the framework. Qualifications are either broken down into units, from which learners then choose their respective set to accumulate credits to obtain an entire qualification. This approach is supposed to increase flexibility and choice for learners but also causes problems in its practical implementation. Otherwise a framework comprises entire qualifications instead of units (Ibid., p.14).

Institution-led and outcomes-led implementation

This last category treats the approaches of implementation of qualifications frameworks. If countries do not possess a significant level of institutionalized qualifications provision they tend to introduce a qualifications framework as a substitute for the lacking provision. In that case the QF is supposedly a driver for the development of institutionalized provision and the creation of new/more qualifications (Ibid.). This approach seems somewhat flawed as it is difficult to develop a framework for qualifications that are in large parts not obtained via institutional provision.

Another case would be the introduction of a QF based on existing high level institutional provision. Here the QF acts as a coordinating tool and aims at establishing links between the different kinds of provision (Ibid.).

3.3 Purpose

As different as qualifications frameworks are designed, as different are their purposes. Nonetheless, when comparing the aims of QFs, a core set of reasons for their introduction can be identified. Raffe (2005, p.24) provides eight of these reasons which are outlined below:

- (i) *"increase transparency and improve understanding of the education and training system and of its parts"*

As has been mentioned before, qualifications frameworks are generally seen as an instrument to improve the communication of qualifications systems with the goal to enhance the understanding of qualifications and their relations to each other. Another frequently mentioned problem is that existing qualifications do not make clear what the person holding the qualification is qualified for. Therefore it is hoped, that via a qualifications framework with specifically defined outcomes for each qualification, they will be more transparent (Allais, 2010, pp.49-50).

- (ii) *"provide an instrument of accountability or control of the education and training system;"*
- (iii) *"enhance the quality of provision, or make it more consistent;"*
- (iv) *"update, improve or extend standards;"*

In cases where trust in institutionalized provision is low, the purpose of some frameworks is the detachment of qualifications from the provision of institutions and inputs. Through this, qualifications are seen as more reliable and accountable because they are based on clearly defined outcomes. Qualifications frameworks then act as an external point of reference and of quality assurance. Quality assurance is sought through the standards that are set for the registration of qualifications in the framework and the latter in turn would supposedly lead to consistency within qualification provision. Often qualifications frameworks are also perceived as drivers for the development of new qualifications or for their redesign (Allais, 2010, p. 55).

- (v) *"promote the mobility of labour or of learners"*

As qualifications frameworks emerge across the globe, policy makers feel increasingly obliged to introduce a national qualifications framework or to be part of a

regional/transnational framework in order to ensure that their domestic qualifications are recognized elsewhere. This is due to the fact, that frameworks are perceived to facilitate the referencing[17] of qualifications not only within the education sectors but also across borders and across geographical regions, which would increase the mobility of labor and learners (Allais, 2010, p.58).

- (vi) "promote access, transfer and progression into, within and between programmes of learning"

Transfer of qualifications and progression of learners demands for certain prerequisites. Firstly, learners need to understand the qualifications system and need to be able to make informed decisions about their respective qualification route. Further, qualifications need to be transparent, comparable and transferrable to enable learners' movement within and across sectors or qualifications pathways.

Qualifications frameworks are seen as the means to these ends as they are thought to serve as a guide to qualifications provision and to improve the transparency of qualifications through clearly defined outcomes. Based on improved transparency the comparability of qualifications would be facilitated. This would then provide the necessary enabling environment for the transfer of acquired credits or qualifications within an education sector or across sectors depending on the scope of the framework (Allais, 2010, pp.49-50, p.53).

Several features of qualifications frameworks could make them a key vehicle for the promotion of access: Qualifications frameworks are used as tools to recognize and accredit informal and non-formal learning, increased transparency and the possibility of credit transfer and accumulation (Ibid., p.55).

- (vii) *"make the education and training system more demand-focused, increasing the influence of learners and employers and reducing the influence of providers"*

Behind this purpose lies the perception that there is a mismatch in educational provision in regard to the demands of the labor market. The role of qualifications frameworks here is to increase the understanding of employers as to what qualifications mean. More importantly qualifications framework policy in many cases aims at increased involvement of stakeholders such as employers or the private sector: If the design of qualifications is shifted towards their responsibility, away from delivering institutions they might develop ownership of and are

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[17]The concept of 'referencing' is treated in more detail in Chapter 3.7.

willing to contribute financially to qualifications provision. Also frameworks might foster the development of more or new qualifications (Allais, 2010, pp.51-52).

- (viii) *"promote lifelong learning; and support wider social and economic transformation"*

If the introduction of a qualifications framework leads to the fulfillment of the above stated purposes, it is likely to contribute to the broader goals of social and economic cohesion and transformation. This is, because it would then ensure equal access to qualifications e.g. for previously excluded groups, recognize and accredit informal and non-formal learning, promote lifelong learning and consequently raise knowledge and skills levels of individuals which strengthens the respective society and economy (Allais, 2010, p. 58).

3.4 Governance and implementation issues

Research reveals that most countries which developed a qualifications framework face or faced difficulties with its implementation.

First of all, NQFs frequently 'collide' with existing qualifications provision due to the different approaches to [the nature of] qualifications and their delivery (Allais, 2010, p.76). NQFs are mostly top-down approaches by a government. As a result the governance of NQFs lies with the Ministries in charge, such as for education and/or labor (Allais, 2010, p.80).

On the executive side, commonly a separate implementation agency, a 'Qualifications Authority' (QA) has been established to oversee framework implementation. QAs are in most cases set up outside existing structures (Ibid., p.75).

The responsibilities of these QAs vary, as can be seen in Chapter 3.6, ranging from comprehensive, hence comprising all aspects of the framework, to single or main purposes. In the latter case the accreditation of qualifications, of provision and personnel as well as assessment, the design of outcomes and standards and/or qualification development are often distributed among other agencies or stakeholders.

The creation of new agencies in addition to already existing institutions and the distribution of NQF related tasks lead to confusion over responsibilities and to inefficiency, as for instance stakeholder participation has generally been low in most countries (Ibid., p.76, pp.80-84). In

Chapter 3.3 it is mentioned that one of the recurring goals of QF policy is to foster collaboration and coordination, but it seems that in reality often the opposite is the case.

At this point two more issues should be briefly discussed: Stakeholder involvement and the recognition of prior non-formal or informal learning (RPL).

As has been hinted at, the involvement of stakeholders is one of the goals of most qualifications framework policies and sometimes turns out to be problematic. On the one hand, participation of stakeholders, in e.g. development of qualifications or level descriptors, could be beneficial for the implementation of a qualifications framework in it emphasizes a democratic momentum in the framework's design. Stakeholder involvement could also contribute to the development of ownership of the framework which would facilitate its acceptance and implementation (Young, 2005, pp.24-25).

But many stakeholders also represent many opinions and demands. This could easily lead to a situation where 'many cooks spoil the soup' and QF development or implementation is hindered. Further, some stakeholder groups might not have the relevant knowledge to contribute to QF development or else push through too many specialist demands (Ibid., p.25).

Another popular purpose of qualifications frameworks is the recognition of learning that has occurred outside formal qualification delivery, mostly referred to as RPL. This is especially prevalent where institutionalized provision is low, the informal sector is large or where [previous] inequalities within qualification delivery exist. RPL provokes the question on how it can be done. Young (2005) points out that it is difficult to compare the informal or non-formal acquisition of skills and knowledge with formally accredited learning activities and therefore questions their equivalency (p.28). The two types of learning bare *"fundamental differences"*: Formal learning processes are based on the link between provision and qualifications and the evidence therein, that learning did in fact take place (Ibid.). Informal or non-formal learning processes often lack this link. Considering this, it appears much harder to develop an assessment procedure for RPL due to the usually more subtle evidence for learning. If it is possible at all, it is more likely that only parts of a qualification can be accredited through RPL, facilitated through unitization of qualifications within NQFs (Ibid.). According to Young (2005), RPL should be seen more as an instrument to facilitate access to further learning activities instead of improving employability through the recognition of prior learning (p.28).

3.5 National qualifications frameworks in developing countries

NQFs seem especially popular with less developed countries where educational provision is weak and/or lacks standards, quality and resources. In that context NQFs are seen to be the means to solve these problems and in some cases also as the most efficient driver for educational reform in general.

Further, developing countries are confronted with globalization and feel obliged to provide qualifications that are internationally recognized (Young, 2005, p.32).

The influence of donor organizations or consultants should not be underestimated as they might put considerable pressure on countries to implement a QF [see Chapter 2.2.3]. The role of the early starter countries in the global development of NQFs is also notable. As Keevy (2008) puts it they "[…] are regularly engaged with other countries and in effect support a general international movement towards the development of qualifications frameworks." (p.5). In fact, several countries in sub-Sahara Africa, like Mauritius and Seychelles, have been engaged with e.g. the South African Qualifications Authority in order to get their NQF policy on the way.

It seems that all this leads to a domino effect with one country after another feeling obliged to introduce an NQF without even seeking an alternative.

Certain difficulties arise from national qualifications frameworks in developing countries. Qualifications frameworks can be strong policy instruments if they can rely on established and strong institutions for their implementation and for qualification provision. Often NQFs are also linked to increased competition of providing institutions. It therefore appears contradictory that in many countries NQFs are introduced to strengthen provision by eventually shifting the focus away from institutions if they are weak. Allais (2010) calls this a *"chicken-and-egg"* situation (p.103). The same is true for the involvement of stakeholders. NQFs depend on the participation of stakeholders since stakeholders are in most cases to an extent responsible for NQF implementation or design. But in a lot of countries stakeholders such as social partners are not fit for this responsibility (Ibid.).

It has been mentioned before that qualifications frameworks frequently aim at getting employers to contribute financially to qualification provision. However, the formal sector in most developing countries is small and employers might not be in the position to take on the

burden of financial contributions. Additionally, employers evidently perceive NQFs as a symbol for increased public funding for education and training provision (Ibid.).

National qualifications frameworks commonly carry the notion of a shift towards outcomes in education and training delivery. Most developed and developing countries do not have any experience with outcomes or modularized programs. Outcomes tend to take away the attention from institutions and where the latter are weak this could prove to be problematic: Institutions need to be strengthened in the first place as they provide the necessary infrastructure in education and training. This infrastructure is also needed for quality assurance of qualifications provision as this cannot be done by a qualifications framework alone (Ibid., p.107).

The 'early starter countries' from where NQF experience is dominantly drawn and expertise sought are developed countries, if anything with the exception of South Africa. Policy makers in developing countries need to be aware that context, circumstances and resources for their own framework are likely to be different. As Young (2007) puts it

> *"In all cases, especially in developing countries with limited educational provision, the [NQF] model will be largely dictated by circumstances." "[…] a developing country with weak institutional [educational] provision cannot avoid moving towards 'prescription'."* (p. 448).

Nonetheless it appears that the level of economic development of a country or even region does not prohibit the development of NQFs (Keevy, 2006, p.4).

It is important to bear in mind that qualifications frameworks alone probably have not much value. They may, however help to solve problems that need a strategic approach. It is emphasized by several authors (Keevy, 2008, Young 2005, Raffe, 2009) that the approach to a framework ideally should not try to achieve overambitious goals; should allow for enough time to develop a solid policy basis; should allow enough time for time capacity building; should allow for the framework to be incremental and home-grown; should call for a simple implementation structure and a simple design.

3.6 Examples of national qualifications frameworks in Africa

3.6.1 Botswana

Botswana is located in southern Africa, bordering South Africa in the south, Namibia in the west, Angola and Zambia in the north and Zimbabwe in the east. The Republic is home to some 2 million people.

In 1998 the 'Botswana Vocational Training Act' provided the *legal framework* for the Botswana national vocational qualifications framework (BNVQF). Its implementation only started in 2004 after the completion of a program geared towards the necessary capacity building (Allais, 2010, p.39).

The *purpose* of the framework is to facilitate the coordination of vocational education and training (VET) as well as its assessment and certification. It is also supposed to facilitate moving between levels and fields of learning or qualification (Botswana Training Authority (BOTA), 2011).

The objectives of Botswana's NVQF are (i) to produce a sufficient number of highly skilled, flexible workers to meet the demands of the country's growing economy; (ii) to increase the attraction of VET as a qualification path and increase participation; (iii) to maintain and enhance the credibility of qualifications; (iv) to formally certify learning that occurs outside institutionalized education qualification provision (Ibid.).

The BNVQF has three levels and each level is described by unit standards according to which learners will be awarded 'certificates of achievement'. Each unit standard contains a minimum of one credit, equal to ten hours of notional learning time, and a maximum of 120 credits. Unit standards are based on learning outcomes. These outcomes are connected to performance statements as recognized evidence for the successful completion of a learning activity (Ibid.).

The Botswana Training Authority is responsible for the coordination of the development of qualifications and of the connected unit standards. The development itself is outsourced to national stakeholders in VET, for instance the Standard Setting Task Force (TF) which is recognized by the BOTA and associated with the Standard Setting Committee (SSC). The SSC acts as an advisory body to the BOTA. All these institutions consist of representatives of employers, employees, qualification providers and other professional stakeholders in the

sector (Ibid.). There are currently 164 unit standards for three sectors: Practice standards for trainers and assessors, Wholesale and Retail and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Ibid).

As a quality assurance measure, providing institutions, assessing bodies and VET trainers have to be registered on the framework in order to issue VET qualifications. To date some 124 institutions are registered and 643 programs offered (Allais, 2010, p.40). Registration is obtained for five years by institutions and three years by trainers and assessors, afterwards registration requires a renewal (BOTA, 2011).

Since 2010 there are activities to develop a Botswana national credit and qualifications framework (BNCQF). This would supposedly result in a more integrated approach including general education, VET and the tertiary sector, ideally without blurring the distinctions between the sectors, the different styles of teaching, assessment and so on. It is proposed to base all registered qualifications on learning outcomes and to develop ten qualification levels with three different strands. The ten levels would hierarchically subsume each other (Botswana National Qualifications Authority (BNQA), 2011).

Each qualification level would contain several qualifications which also implicates that comparison between qualifications is possible based on their complexity and knowledge, albeit different purposes or content (BNQA, 2011).

It is also recommended that each level contains level descriptors which are not intended to be precise or comprehensive statements rather they are a source of information about the desired state of personal development of a learner in terms of knowledge, skills and achievement and about specific economic goals (Ibid.).

The policy goals of the introduction of the BNCQF are to harmonize the credit system in general education and in the VET sector; to facilitate and prioritize the recognition of prior learning; to recognize the different forms of learning in education and to establish standards of occupational and professional competence (Ibid.).

Moreover it is suggested that a Quality-Coordinator and a Quality Council be appointed to overhaul the quality assurance system

"to emphasize an integrated partnership approach to quality, which would rely on five main processes: self-evaluation by providers; institutional accreditation; the ongoing monitoring of provider activities; the quality assurance of learning achievements; and quality audits." (Ibid.).

Summary

The introduction of the Botswana national vocational qualifications framework has apparently led to a degree of coherence in the VET sector through the registration of providing institutions and their programs on the framework. This certainly contributes to standardization and quality assurance, although it is not known if all of the over 600 registered programs are being used. The BNVQF has also brought under way the development of a more integrated national credit and qualifications framework (BNCQF). The BNVQF is a good example of solid NQF policy: After the first legislation towards a NQF was passed, six years were taken for capacity building. The BNVQF is a simply designed partial framework, for the sector it is apparently most needed in. Responsibilities appear to be clearly distributed among stakeholders.

3.6.2 Gambia

The Gambia is a small nation at the west coast of Africa, embedded in the geographical area of the Senegal with around 1.8 million inhabitants.

In 1998 a 'Skills Development Policy' was implemented to drive reform of the Gambian VET sector. This policy led to the 'National Training Authority Act' in 2002. The Act as *legal basis* gave way to the establishment of the Gambian National Training Authority (NTA) in 2003 as part of an enabling environment for VET reform. The NTA's responsibilities are to:

"regulate national vocational qualifications; coordinate the quality of delivery of technical and vocational education and training; make technical and vocational education and training relevant to all occupations, skilled artisans, semi skilled workers and to occupations classified in the unskilled category; encourage and promote lifelong learning to all Gambians" (NTA, 2006, p.5).

In November 2006 the Gambia skills and qualification framework (GSQF) policy was finally approved. Development of the GSQF was inspired by other African qualifications frameworks such as in Botswana, South Africa or Namibia and is also oriented towards the UK's NVQ practices and the emerging European Qualifications Framework (EQF) (NTA, 2006, p.6). The GSCQ is a *partial framework* committed to VET and literacy skills and it is supposed to be a

> *"comprehensive suite of local but internationally accepted qualifications accessible or affordable by all Gambians, reflecting the skill standards needed to support human resource development across all economic sectors."* (NTA, 2006, p.6).

Together with the GSQF 30 skills standards and qualifications in four fields of priority were brought on the way. The priority fields are Agriculture (horticulture), Hospitality (customer care and food hygiene and safety), Construction (domestic house wiring) and Engineering (motor mechanic) (NTA, 2009-2011). Hence, the development of qualifications is targeted and organized according to these priority needs (NTA, 2006, p.37-38)

The GSQF has qualifications at four main levels and a foundation level. To shift the attention to the outcomes of a learning activity, qualifications obtained through the GSQF scheme are titled by their numerical levels and do not make reference to the kind of certification or occupation e.g. diploma or craftsman. Levels one to three also have a subdivision for practical qualifications (NTA, 2006, p.7).

The foundation level is designed for those who are/were trained non-formally and for early school leavers. Obtaining the foundation qualification opens the route to the occupational qualifications in levels one to four. Foundation level assessment is not based on writing, English language or ICT but qualifications are still equivalent to a full occupational qualification on the respective level (NTA, 2006, pp.8-9).

Qualifications		Level Descriptor- *potential for*
Level 4		Competence to perform management and analytical skills and / or specialist skills associated with jobs that are non routine eg middle manager / professional worker
Level 3 Practical	Level 3	Competence to perform tasks associated with skilled jobs of routine and complex nature sometimes with supervisory functions eg team leader
Level 2 Practical	Level 2	Competence to perform routine and some non-routine tasks under minimum guidance and supervision eg skilled worker
Level 1 Practical	Level 1	Competence to perform a limited range of work activities whilst working under supervision eg trained worker
Foundation Level		Initial skills - basic skills in English communication, life skills, numeracy and non occupational work skills with literacy in mother tongue as an option

(NTA, 2006, p.9)

Illustration 4: The Gambian SQF

Through the foundation and practical qualifications the GSQF takes account of the estimated 54% of illiterates among the Gambian population (Ibid., p.9). To date skills training in Gambia is provided informally through community skills development programs, informal apprenticeships or other ways of experiential learning. Therefore one of the main purposes of the GSQF is to holistically assess informal and non-formal learning (Ibid., p.35, p.39).

All levels of the framework are based on a set of level descriptors which contain the associated learning outcomes. Further, level descriptors provide the basis for the development of unit standards within a qualification. The unit standards contain precise statements about the desired skills and competences in a particular field of occupation. There are two main categories of unit standards: Category one consisting of key skills comprising literacy, life skills, numeracy, work skills, English communication, use of ICT and business. Category two represents the occupational skills containing three types of occupational skill units: Mandatory, core and optional (Ibid., p.17).

There are credits allocated to all unit standards, one credit representing ten hours of notional learning time or practice or assessment (NTA, 2006, p.11)[18].

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[18] For a qualification on levels one to four credits have to be obtained in ICT, English, Work skills, numeracy, and occupation skills. For a practical qualification credits have to be obtained in work skills, numeracy and occupation skills. For the foundation qualification credits have to be obtained in life skills, English, work skills, numeracy and literacy.

Any training provider in Gambia needs to develop a curriculum based on the unit standards on the GSQF. Since the curriculum is generally owned by the providers, the NTA only provides some guidance on the matter (Ibid., p.25).

Qualifications development and skills training is the responsibility of 'Lead Bodies'. There are Lead Bodies for all economic fields and they consist of representatives from all sub-fields of the respective economy, from small and large enterprises (Ibid., p.15).

Stakeholders in the development of standards are members of a so called 'Standards Panel' which consists of: "*Employers from large and small enterprises, training providers, sector bodies, government departments and agencies, trade unions, awarding bodies and others.*" (Ibid.)

Summary

Gambia's skills and qualifications framework policy clearly aims at developing a public-private partnership for skills and qualification reform in the country by leaving curriculum development to VET providers and involving them at the level of standard and qualifications development. Although the GSQF was developed by drawing "heavily" from other frameworks in Africa and Europe, it can be seen as an example for good practice in the region. This is due to its very own country specific emphasis on (i) literacy and numeracy provision; (ii) on accreditation of experiential and informal learning as a response to training in the informal sector and a considerable number of illiterates; (iii) due to the focus on priority fields of training provision according to the country's economic needs.

3.6.3 Namibia

Namibia is located in the west of southern Africa and has a population of 2.1 million. The Republic with a considerable coastline at the Atlantic Ocean borders South Africa in the south, Botswana and Zambia in the east and Angola in the north.

The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) came into being based on the 'Namibia Qualifications Authority Act' in 1996. The motivation behind the establishment of the NQA was the need for a central body to coordinate and overlook educational reform in post-

independence Namibia. Similar to South Africa, Namibia was suffering from inequities and imbalance within society due to its colonial and apartheid heritage. Once independence was gained from South Africa in 1990, Namibia was faced with a globalizing economy, increased competitiveness and mobility as well as the shift towards knowledge-based economies. Naturally, the country did not intend to fall behind these developments. At the time national education stakeholders were being asked to evaluate the existing training provision, to learn whether the needed knowledge, understanding and skills were developed and to specify the required types and levels of competence that were needed for qualifications (NQA, 2011). The government envisioned an education system accessible for everyone at all times that is learner centered, hence based on their decisions and based on quality, equity and democratic processes, providing the relevant skills for the country. To these ends the NQA was formed (Ibid.).

The NQA is responsible for the accreditation of the country's education providers and programs and the relevant administrative body to identify the different education and qualification possibilities in Namibia and provide information about them. Other legislative obligations are to advise about qualifications and standards for qualification and to ensure that all qualifications meet the national standards. More importantly the NQA was assigned the development and administration of the Namibian national qualifications framework (NNQF).
The NNQF in seen as the "[…] primary mechanism for achieving greater quality in education and training" and "[…] is intended to be a register of all relevant and legal qualifications in Namibia." (Ibid.). It was developed in consultation with government and education stakeholders, the Namibian industry, professional associations and other countries with NQF experience. The final version of the Namibian NQF was only approved in 2005. There are some distinctive principles for the framework: It is supposed to take account of all individuals' right to lifelong learning; everyone should have access to the different pathways that lead to success; the focus lies on quality provision through standard setting; the framework should accredit prior learning and set up links between provision and required competence across career fields; emphasize stakeholder involvement and offer integrated progression routes and avoid dead-end qualifications (Ibid.).

The purpose of the NNQF is the promotion of consistency within the qualifications sector and increasing transparency of qualifications, to provide information about qualifications and how

they are aligned in the labor market, to assure the quality of education and assessment and increase the reputation of education and training in Namibia internationally (Ibid.).

The NNQF is a *comprehensive and inclusive framework* meaning that it comprises all qualifications and certification from school to university level. The NNQF is also designed to recognize all learning that has occurred in the past, formally, informally or non-formally. Consisting of ten levels the framework illustrates the possible acquisition of certificates in school, secondary or tertiary and further education from level one to level eight and the acquisition of diplomas from level five to level eight. A Bachelor degree and a professional Bachelor represent level seven and a Bachelor degree with honors level eight. A Master degree would represent level nine and a Doctoral degree level ten (NQA, 2011).

There are level descriptors for each level containing statements about: The learning skills; the type of knowledge acquired; how learning is demonstrated and in which situations; the required degree of supervision when demonstrating skills and knowledge; the responsibility of actions taken by a learner and the degree of responsibility that can be taken for others (Ibid.).
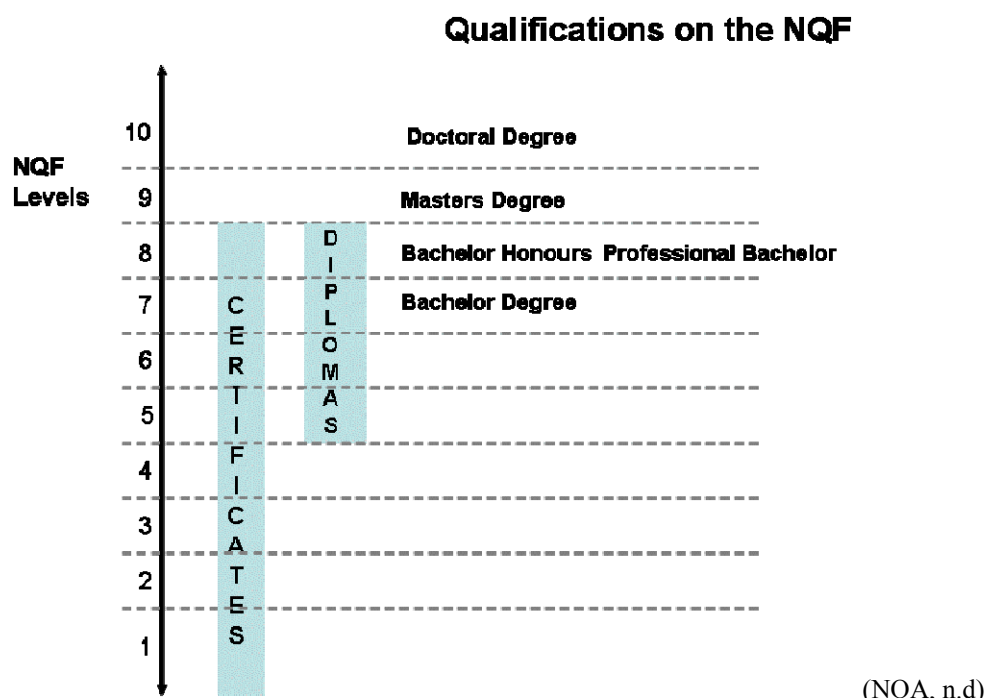

(NQA, n.d)

Illustration 5: The Namibian NQF

Clearly the NNQF is based on outcomes, which in its context are defined as "the application of knowledge and skills learned". It does not refer to where, when and how a qualification is possibly achieved.

In 2010 the NQA gave out an 'Advice Notice' to education and training providers instructing them that for accreditation of their provision on the framework, they need to hand in detailed course statements, or outcomes and a credit score representing the effort made by learners to achieve the outcomes (NQA, 2010).

Standard setting for curriculum and occupations in Namibia are subject to the NQA's legislative obligations. The institution also develops performance benchmarks for all occupations and positions. Obviously the NQA seems to hold a monopoly as far as the NNQA in concerned. However to distribute powers and to involve a variety of stakeholders, the NQA is governed by a council which exists of 36 members, appointed for three years by the Minister of Education (NQA, 2011). The council represents public higher institutions; employers and employees and the private economy sectors; government ministries and agencies as well as groups in charge of "differently abled learners". Further, the council has several committees to its assistance in matters of qualification, executive, finance, human resource and accreditation, assessment and audit (Ibid.).

Summary

The underpinning principles and the purpose represent the distinctive circumstances out of which the Namibian national qualifications framework initially was developed: White minority rule prevented many Namibians for a long time from partaking in education and receiving adequate qualifications. The framework recognizes this by emphasizing an outcomes-based approach as a possibility to 'catch up' for all those who could make use of any informal or non-formal qualification. Shifting decision making to the learners via leaner centered provision and the notion on lifelong learning both account for the democratic momentum that is obviously of high importance to today's Namibia. This is further reflected by the involvement of a range of different stakeholders in the NQA council and this involvement is clearly also a means to design provision closer to the needs of the market and consequently increase economic competitiveness.

3.6.4 Rwanda

Rwanda covers a small territory in central Africa, bordering Burundi in the south, Tanzania in the east, Uganda in the north and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. Rwanda counts more than 11 million inhabitants.

The higher education qualifications framework (HENQF) for Rwanda is valid for students since 2007. Proposed by the 'National Council for Higher Education' and developed by the 'Kigali Institute for Education' (Kie) the HENQF is a framework for the requirements for the awards of Rwandan HE institutions. The reason for its introduction was/is a fast expanding higher education (HE) sector with a multitude of HE providers. The Rwandan NQF for HE is supposed to help developing a single, coherent and coordinated sector, to foster public awareness of the available HE qualifications and to promote confidence in Rwandan academic standards. Thus the HENQF is seen as a reference for learners, employers and the public, helping them understand the available qualifications, how these relate to each other and how they improve skills. It supposedly clarifies the possible routes for progression within the system and therefore is also a measure to widen participation and enable lifelong learning (Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, (Kist) 2011).

Further objectives of the framework are to increase flexibility of the system by enabling students to move from one program to another and between HE institutions and to maintain appropriate standards as well as the international comparability of HE programs (Kist, 2011). Through the HENQF Rwandan HE awards can be measured against international standards and the framework also functions as a tool for academic quality assurance. Qualifications or awards are located on the framework through the levels of learning outcomes and the volume of the academic program. HE awards are based on a "Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS)" (Kie, 2007, p.3). Accordingly, academic study is organized into modules and the modules consist of a number of student credits (Ibid., pp.3-4).

The Framework has seven levels: Level 1 comprises the first year of a full-time undergraduate course, level 2 the second year and levels 3 and 4 comprise the third year. Level 5 represents the fourth and final undergraduate year, level 6 covers the Master level and level 7 the Doctoral (Ibid., p.3).

Note that in Rwanda a Bachelor degree takes three to four years full-time and part-time four to five years. A Bachelor degree with honors will take four to five years and part-time six to seven years (Ibid., p.8).

Generic learning outcomes serve as level descriptors that define each level. That means that for each subject benchmark statements need to be defined to give information about the expected outcomes. These outcomes are based on knowledge and understanding and their application in practice; cognitive skills, and skills in communication, ICT and numeracy; the degree of autonomy and responsibility and the ability to work with others. (Ibid., p.17).

Some of the underpinning principles of the HENQF for Rwanda obviously promote outcomes-based education, for example:

> *(iv) "Differentiation between levels should not be based on the nature of the learning or scholarship involved, e.g. whether a programme is taught or research-based but instead on learning outcome; (v) Progression in time during a sequence of study does not necessarily entail progression to a higher level of learning;[…](vii) Credit should be allocated on the basis of completed modules, not time served"* (Kist, 2011).

The promotion of outcomes-based education or in this case more specifically outcomes-based academics becomes also apparent when looking at the Kie's policy on learner centered pedagogy. Besides outlining a detailed module syllabus and indicating the assessment specifically a module administrator or lecturer is e.g. supposed to

> *"Take the learners in confidence on the very first day as to how they would take up the challenge of learner centred education, which warrants discipline and high degree of motivation to meet the demand wrested on them. From your part you make your own initiative to sensitize them about their responsibilities."* (Kie, n.d., p.1)

Learners on their behalf are provided self study hours, which they are advised to manage on their own and to appreciate the benefits of group work (Kie, n.d., p.2).

Summary

The first real implications of the HENQF for Rwanda seem to be a modularized HE system and a shift to outcomes-based academics. It remains to be seen if learners in the sector will adapt well to these changes, which also provoke a revisited curriculum and a different approach to the training of academic staff.

These four examples represent the very different approaches to national qualifications frameworks in sub-Sahara Africa. Moreover, different NQF practice accounts for conscious policy making as countries seemingly seek to tailor frameworks according to domestic needs. Besides the briefly outlined cases above other countries are about to develop national qualifications frameworks. For instance a framework for teachers is being developed presently in Angola since 2008, with the support of UNESCO's Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Sahara Africa (TTISSA) and with the funding of the Education for All (EFA) capacity building programme and the Spanish government (TTISSA, 2008, p.5).

The Tanzania Commission for Universities issued a final draft for a ten level comprehensive NQF, also valid for Zanzibar, in March 2010. Its development will be launched once a National Qualification Authority is established (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2010).

3.7 Transnational frameworks

As the global interest in national qualifications frameworks increased at the beginning of the 21st century, the idea was formed that the development did not have to halt at individual countries' boundaries, that a more regional or transnational approach was possible. To date several examples of transnational qualifications frameworks (TQF) exist. It is not entirely clear which TQF was the first but concluding from the legal basis on which the respective TQFs were or are being established, the framework for the SADC region (SADCQF) could be the earliest example as it dates from 1997 (SADC, 2005, p.12). A closer look at the SADCQF is taken below.

With the prospect of ongoing enlargement the European Union (EU) sees itself facing the challenges of currently 27 different educational and training systems, producing a large number of different qualifications. To increase transparency of qualifications, support mobility within the labor market and promote lifelong learning, a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) will be implemented as officially proposed in 2008. Member states of the EU have been advised to each develop a NQF which then ideally applies to the EQF. The EQF is based on the Bologna process of 1999, the Lisbon strategy of 2000 as well as the Copenhagen process of 2002 (European Commission, 2008).

In 2003 a regional coordinating mechanism was introduced as an important step towards a qualifications framework for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The CARICOM

framework is currently limited to VET, based on Caribbean Vocational Qualifications with the purpose of moving towards a single market and economy (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.8).

The latest example for a TQF is the development of the framework for the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). The 'Commonwealth' refers to the 'Commonwealth of Learning' (COL) which comprises 32 states of which 29- the 'small states'- have less than one million inhabitants e.g. Jamaica, Fiji or Malta. The development of the VUSSC framework was initiated in 2007 according to the request of the member states "to create mechanisms to support the accreditation of qualifications and transfer of credits between [the commonwealth] countries […]" (COL, 2010, p.5).

Keevy, Chakroun and Deij (2010) conducted the first comparative study on transnational qualifications frameworks. They defined a TQF as a means "to include different forms of recognition and classification of qualifications across groupings of countries;" (p.8).

As with NQFs there are variations of TQFs: They are either frameworks on the regional level with participating countries in geographic proximity and often grouped into some kind of respective regional organization. In this case they are also referred to as regional qualifications frameworks (RQF); an example would be the EQF. Or else they are international frameworks limited to a certain sector, e.g. VET and with countries involved located not necessarily in the same geographic area; an example would be the VUSSC framework (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.8).

What are the characteristics of TQFs? Looking at the examples of TQFs, there are several common features to these frameworks: Different from NQFs, TQFs are more communicative in nature as they are an attempt to find commonalities among the involved qualification systems. They can be sectoral or partial in scope but often include several sectors or the entire qualifications system they are not based on legislation that imposes sanctions or other punishment if not applied. Rather they are underpinned by protocols, policies, conventions and so forth. As a result TQFs are often voluntary or at least have limited institutional organization for their governance/management (Ibid., p.9).

What is the relation between TQFs and NQFs? Keevy, Chakroun and Deij (2010) identified three categories of relationships between national qualifications frameworks and TQFs.

First there is *prioritization of the development of NQFs* in the member states. In that case the development of the TQF is delayed until countries have established their own NQF. In so doing, member states that lag behind in the NQF development can catch up and can be equally involved in TQF development later on. On the other hand the TQF delay can last very long due to different stages of NQF development (p.12).

Secondly there is the *prioritization of TQF development* which can happen (a) if only few member states have yet introduced an NQF and the TQF is the driver for NQF development and (b) if the majority of member states has introduced an NQF and the TQF is the next step towards integration. The advantage of this approach is that TQF development is facilitated and therefore quicker. But countries with no or less developed NQFs might not be able to keep up with TQF development (p.12).

Finally *TQF and NQF development can take place at the same time*. Although this approach is probably the most promising one in terms of capacity building, it requires significant resources, cross-country cooperation of member states and their direct involvement in TQF development (p.13)

The most complicated matter is the issue of *referencing* between a NQF and a TQF. Referencing means to compare frameworks in order to achieve some form of coherence of the qualifications, levels and credits registered on the frameworks (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.13). The EQF provides an example of referencing NQFs against a TQF, in fact referencing can be seen as one of the main purposes of the EQF.
As much as it is a complicated procedure, referencing is also an important function of TQFs as it uncovers the particular strengths and weaknesses of either the TQF or NQF, enhances the trust between the national and transnational or regional bodies and provides opportunities for stakeholder involvement and cooperation (Ibid.).

A threefold categorization of referencing is helpful: *"Upward referencing"* describes the comparison between a NQF and a TQF or between a partial framework and a NQF or a TQF. *"Peer referencing"* between two NQFs or between two TQFs and *"downward referencing"* refers to the matching of TQFs to NQFs or from NQFs to partial frameworks (Ibid.).

3.8 The transnational qualifications framework for the SADC

An example of a transnational qualifications framework which is relevant to the case studies in Section 2 is the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) as presented below.

In 1997, the Southern African Development Community passed its 'Protocol on Education and Training' which gave way to the establishment of the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA). The TCCA was assigned the key task of developing and recommending

> *"[…] policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonizing and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC."* (TCCA, 2005, p.12).

The committee, among other tasks, is also responsible for the facilitation of the development of the member states' NQFs and the harmonization of these NQFs into the regional framework for the SADC (Ibid.). The SADC qualifications framework is defined by the TCCA as "a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardised terminology […]" (2005, p.23).

The decision to develop the SADCQF evolved out of the strategic goal to "harmonise and standardise" education and training in the region and the regional framework is seen as the means to this end. The vision is that a regional framework would enhance regional integration and the competitiveness of the region and would assure the quality of education and training provision (Ibid.).

The TQF approach is also underpinned by the 'Arusha Convention' of 1981 [revised in 2002, 2003 and rewritten between 2006 and 2010] (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2010, p.41).
The convention explicitly recognizes the colonial heritage of most sub-Saharan nations and against this background emphasizes the cooperation of the now independent African states. Although the convention is currently limited to the HE sector as a framework for "the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas, degrees and other academic qualifications" (UNESCO, 2002) it represents harmonization without blurring the different structures of the individual states' education systems; an approach that is also promoted by the proposed framework for the SADC (TCCA, 2005, pp. 17-18).

Naturally the examples of other NQFs in the world, globalization and technological advancement are other key drivers for the development SADCQF (Ibid., pp.18-19).

According to the TCCA, a transnational qualifications framework holds several benefits for the involved countries. A TQF would promote dialogue, partnership and mutual understanding between the countries; it would help countries to fill their education and training gaps by creating a wider pool of knowledge, skills and values; it would increase access to highly skilled persons through improved efficiency and standardization; flexibility and mobility of learners would be enhanced and access to more learning opportunities gained; the framework would facilitate credit transfer and referencing of qualifications against each other; it would be a tool to regulate cross-border provision and help to streamline and rationalize education and training resources; and it would ensure equity and justice in the provision of qualifications (TCCA, 2005, p.20). Thus its purpose is the facilitation of harmonization and comparability of qualifications and their mutual recognition as well as the creation if regional standards.

What is the scope of the SADCQF and how is it designed? The SADCQF is intended to be a *non-regulatory, comprehensive framework* including all forms and levels of the qualifications systems in the community's member states. Besides public and private provision this comprises cross-border and NGO initiatives and all categories of learning outside institutions or formal settings (Ibid., p.24).

To ensure that the SADC is also a sustainable framework, it relies on stakeholder involvement and regional and international cooperation (Ibid., pp.33-34).

A number of *principles* have been proposed by the TCCA to serve as the basis for the framework, of which the following examples have been selected as the most important ones.

- *"Interactive with global and local frameworks":* the SADCQC will be used for the referencing against other frameworks in Africa and elsewhere;
- *"Respect for regional and multilateral decisions":* the sovereignty of the member states in educational matters will be guarded, therefore no legislation similar to the domestic NQF legislation will be passed, but the SADCQF will be based on flexible, mutual arrangements of the member states;
- *"Pragmatism in development":* the framework is to be developed phase-by-phase with realistic objectives;
- *"Prioritasation of projects"*: to ensure the feasibility of the framework and an informed basis for its development, projects will be carried out;

- *"Home-grown":* a SADCQF needs to be essentially home-grown and developed for the particular demands of the member states in the region, with the involvement of local experts rather than foreign advisors*;* (TCCA, 2005, pp.24-26).

The design of the SADCQF is not yet finalized. It is suggested that NQF stakeholders from the member states should be involved in the design process together with the yet to be established implementation agency of the SADCQF. This will not be an easy task as NQF design in the region differs.

However it has already been decided that the SADCQF will be a framework comprising *eight to ten levels* with level descriptors based on credits and standardized terminology. Additionally, the SADCQF terminology and standards, the procedures for quality assurance and validation of qualifications and information on all member states' qualifications systems should be accessible in a regional database (Ibid., pp.26-27).

As far as the *organizational structure* of the SADCQF is concerned, it has already been mentioned that there will be an implementing agency. According to the TCCA, all organizational structure should be integrated into the already existing structures of the SADC, as not to strain capacities and resources in the region. Thus the implementing agency is recommended to be the 'Qualifications Agency of the SADC' (SADCQA) with different divisions, namely a 'Regional Steering Committee' for the development of the TQF, an 'Implementation Unit' representing the SADCQA's executive and the Secretariat of the SADC to monitor and supervise the SADCQA.

The 'TCCA Concept Paper for the SADCQF' of March 2005 provides a timeframe for an implementation plan. This implementation plan foresaw the establishment of the Qualifications Agency SADCQA for 2006 and the completion of SADCQF implementation for 2010 (TCCA, 2005, p.37). But despite a number of activities by the TCCA, mainly in research, progress on the framework has been limited. Reasons for the slow progress are manifold. Keevy, Chakroun and Deij (2010) list the following:
Due to the variety of NQF models and education and training systems in the region, there is a lack of common understanding of terminology and in the consistency of qualifications design and their recognition (p.42).

Although the SADCQF is supposed to enhance the cooperation of SADC members, a lack of awareness of regional and national initiatives persists and trust between SADC members remains low in some cases (p.42 and p.44).

Maybe because of the strong notion of a "home-grown" framework the initiative to draw lessons from the development of other TQFs has not been taken, yet. On the other hand South Africa's potential as a driver for SADCQF development has been underutilized. The country itself has not really committed itself to a TQF either, since it faces a strong discourse against the export of its NQF and the outcomes-based education model. Both are said to have significant weaknesses (p.43).

Doubts about outcomes are prevalent also in other SADC countries where this approach is seen as suitable for VET but not for other sectors of the qualifications system. This is likely due to the strong historical focus on curriculum in the region (p.43).

On the operational side the TCCA is currently faced with ongoing discontinuity concerning its members. That puts constraints on SADCQF development. Additionally, the impact of the SADC 'Protocol on Education and Training' which represents the overarching policy for the TQF, has been limited (p.46. and p.47).

It has been mentioned that the SADCQF attributes priority to the development of the NQFs in the member states. Different qualifications systems and opinions about NQFs, as well as large economic discrepancies among SADC countries contribute to the fact that the progress in NQF development varies widely. This of course delays SADCQF development.

Three reviews of the progress in SADC member states were conducted since the establishment of the TCCA in 1997. The reviews date back to 2002, 2005 and 2007. In the case of Angola previous assessment was graded down in 2007 and 2005, therefore it is not assessed chronologically. Madagascar joined the SADC in 2006 hence could not be assessed in 2002 and 2005. Further Swaziland was also not assessed in 2005 (Keevy, Chakroun, Deij, 2009, p.49). The table below shows the respective results of the reviews.

Country	Stage (with year in which review took place)						
	0	1	2	3a	3b	4a	4b
Angola			2007		2002	2005	
Botswana			2002	2005, 2007			
DRC	2002, 2005, 2007						
Lesotho			2002	2005, 2007			
Madagascar			2007				
Malawi	2002	2005	2007				
Mauritius					2002, 2005,		
Mozambique		2002, 2005	2007				
Namibia					2002	2005, 2007	
South Africa					2002	2005, 2007	
Swaziland		2007	2002				
Tanzania	2002	2005	2007				
Zambia		2002	2005, 2007				
Zimbabwe				2002, 2005, 2007			

(Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2009, p.49)

Illustration 6: Stages of NQF development in SADC countries

These are the stages of development:

- *"Stage 0: No progress made and no reports received;"*
- *"Stage 1: Background work underway and initial discussion with politicians, education and training officials and advocacy being done;"*
- *"Stage 2: Initial development, task teams/steering committee established, conceptual papers developed and implementation plans developed;"*
- *"Stage 3a: Draft legislation formulated, some structures already in place;"*
- *"Stage 3b: Legislation formulated and passed, Authority established, Structures established, Development of procedures and processes, Development of standards, quality assurance systems and management of information system;"*
- *"Stage 4a: Advanced implementation and system already functional for five or more Years;"*
- *"Stage 4b: Continuous reviews conducted and evaluation and adjustments applied."* (Keevy, Chakroun and Deij, 2009, p.49).

Finally the SADC or more precisely the TCCA missed yet to establish ownership of the transnational framework and of its development. This is partly due to the regions persisting dependency on external funding and due to the fact that stakeholders such as universities or industries, which are supposed to contribute to SADCQF and NQF development from their own funds, have mostly not done so (p. 46).

Summary

The example of the qualifications framework for the SADC region shows that it can be a long way from the conceptualization of a framework to its actual implementation. One of the main problems with the SADCQF is its dependency on NQF development in the member states. The disparities between the member states' stages of NQF development might delay the implementation of the transnational framework intermittently. And since NQF approaches differ, even the design of the SADCQF could prove to be a difficult task if all member states get a say in the process. On the other hand, slow development leaves time for capacity building and supports the notion of 'incrementalism', meaning a step by step development and implementation. If the SADCQF grows out of a multinational effort, it will truly be home-grown, taking account of the specific context and conditions of the region it is developed for.

Section 2: The case studies

4 Seychelles

4.1 Geography and history

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean off the coast of the African continent. It is located northeast of Madagascar and east of the coastlines of Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania. The Seychellois islands cover a geographical area of 455 sq km, the main island being Mahé on which the capital Victoria is located.

In 1502, the Portuguese Vasco Da Gama discovered Seychelles on a voyage to Asia. Still, it took more than 200 years for the first settlers to arrive on the islands afterwards, these settlers being French and African slaves. The Archipelago eventually became a French colony (Seychelles Ministry of Education[19] (SMoE), 1999, p.3). After a lengthy conflict with Britain over the territory, the latter was given to the British Crown and became part of its Empire in 1814 (CIA World Factbook (WF), 2011).

Seychelles gained its independence in 1976. The then multi-party government was overthrown only one year later and a single-party socialist state was established which lasted until 1992. In 1993, a new constitution was brought under way and free elections were held, again resulting in a multi-party government headed by the current president James Micheal (CIA WF, 2011, SMoE, 1999, p.3).

4.2 The socio-economic setting

In 2009, Seychelles' capital Victoria was home to 26,000 people (CIA WF, 2011). The Archipelago's population total in 2009 was 84.298, of which 55 per cent lived in urban areas. Out f the population total 60.649 people belonged to the 15-64 age group and 19.752 were between 0 and 14 years of age (Seychelles National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2010, p.10, p.25).

The population of Seychelles is made up of mixed French, African, Indian, Chinese and Arab ethnicities [in order of quantity]. Major religious groups in 2002 were Roman Catholic with

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[19] The Ministry of Education is also referred to as the Ministry of Education and Youth.

82.3 per cent, Anglican [6.4 per cent], other Christian denominations [3.4 per cent] and Hindu [2.1 per cent] (CIA WF, 2011).

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Seychelles was estimated at 2.053 Billion US dollars in 2010 with estimated per capita GDP of 23.200 US dollars in the same year (CIA WF, 2011). In 2009, goods worth over 3000 Million Seychellois Rupees (SR) were exported, above all fish meal, [frozen] fish and canned tuna. Imports worth 11.000 Million SR consisted mainly of food and life animals, mineral fuels, manufactured goods and machinery (NBS, 2010, pp.56-57).

The biggest formal employment industries in 2009 were Construction, the Hotel and Restaurant sector, Public Administration, Manufacturing and Transport, Storage and Communication [in order of employment ratio]. Employment in the formal industry by sectors was distributed as follows: Private sector 27.721, parastatal sector 4.865 and the government sector 9.305 where education was the largest sub-division with 2.350 employees (NBS, 2010, pp.129-132).

4.3 Education in Seychelles

4.3.1 History

Dates marking the beginning of any form of education in Seychelles vary. Probably, the first school resembling structures emerged at the beginning of the 19th century in communities of the first settlers, mainly exiled French. During French and later British colonial rule the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church were the main protagonists in education. The Churches set up primary schools from 1851 onwards as part of their parishes. While the role of the respective colonial government was limited, religious orders started to develop secondary education in 1861 and 1871 (SMoE, 1999, p.3).

In 1940, primary school started to be formally organized with the first secular charity school. The Government's role in education increased as in 1949 an 'Education Ordinance' was adopted. Government grant funds were introduced for every school which led to a gradual take-over of school organization and curriculum by the British colonial administration (Purvis, 2004, p.46, SMoE, 1999, p.3).

The Ministry of Education (1999) states that according to a census in 1960, 70 per cent of 12-year olds attended schooling but did not meet sufficient secondary education provision, which caused the attendance ratio to drop to 25 per cent at age 15 (p.3). Although attendance had increased to 83 per cent and 29 per cent respectively in 1971, there were numerous of reasons for the persistently low enrolment: The value of education was not appreciated by all parents, children were supposed to work and contribute to the family's financing or they were needed at home to look after younger siblings. On the other hand, the employment sector did not need highly skilled workers at the time (Ernesta, 1988, cited in: SMoE, 1999, p.4). Previous to independence in 1976, the educational system was characterized by dualism and unequal opportunities entrenched by fee-paying and non-fee paying schools. The latter were government led and the quality of their provision was lower than in the fee-paying schools, that tended to cater for an elite who possessed the necessary financial resources and social standing (SMoE, 1999, pp.5-6). In 1977, the socialist government was established. According to the philosophy of the new government, the objectives for education were modified towards "comprehensive and inclusive education for all, free of charge" (Purvis, 2004, p.46) and are underpinned by three basic policy principles: Education for all, education for life and education for personal and national development (SMoE, 1999, p.8).

To bring about change, a first set of educational reforms was passed in 1978 and their implementation took until 1983. At the heart of these reforms, supported by significant investment in educational infrastructure, formally organized teacher training and the development of local instructional resources were

"The introduction of a zoning policy requiring all students to attend nine years of primary schooling in their own districts.;

"The adoption of a new language policy which emphasised multilingualism in schools (Creole, English and French became the national languages) and the introduction of Creole, the mother tongue, as medium of instruction in the first four years of primary school."

"The setting up of the National Youth Service, a two-year residential programme at the end of the ninth year of school, aiming to develop 'the whole person' through community living and sharing."

"The setting up of a centralised curriculum development unit to produce syllabi and instructional materials relevant to the local context."

"The building of new schools or upgrading of existing ones to ensure the provision, initially, of nine years free compulsory education for all children."
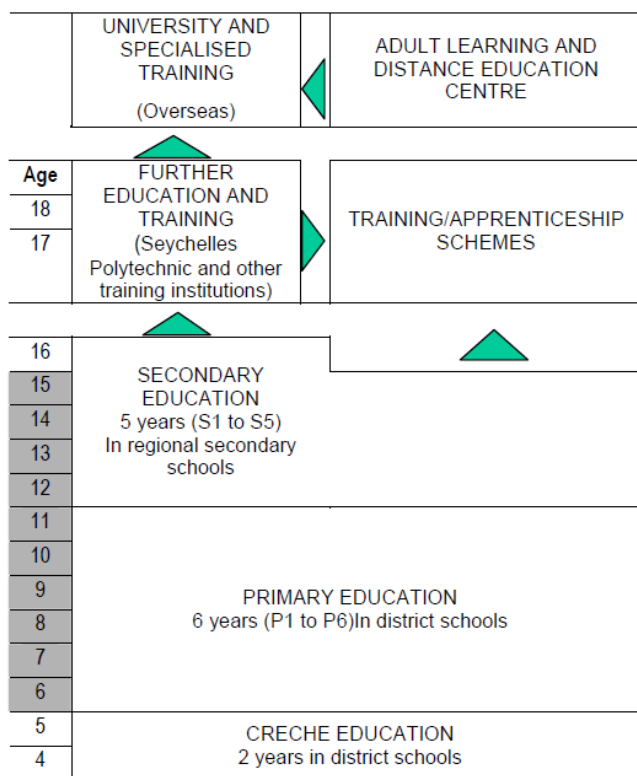
"The start of a review of the national assessment system, which led to the development of a new system of home grown national examinations. "

"The establishment of the Seychelles Polytechnic in 1983, a post-secondary institution which centralised all the existing technical and vocational training courses at the time." (Purvis, 2004, p.48).

The 1990s saw another set of reforms. For instance in 1990/91 the National Youth Service was reduced from two years to one year, the possibility for students to sit for the 'Cambridge General Certificate of Education at O[rdinary]-level' exams was reintroduced. Also secondary schools were reintroduced on a regional level and with a mandatory four years of attendance (Purvis, 2004, p.48). In 1998/99 the National Youth Service was abandoned altogether and secondary schooling extended to five years, with a broader range of subjects, e.g. a combination of academic and technical subjects. At the time Seychelles also saw the opening of the National Institute for Education with the purpose to carry out teacher training and the development of a centralized 'National Curriculum' (Ibid., p. 49).

4.3.2 The current system

To date education in Seychelles comprises a comprehensive primary and secondary school system for both, boys and girls and free of charge. Attendance is at almost 100 per cent for children aged 5 to 16 or older. All eligible students can proceed into further and higher education (Ibid., p.46). The structure of the current system is illustrated below and the table shows latest enrolment numbers at different educational levels.

(Purvis, 2004, p.47)

Illustration 7: The educational system in Seychelles

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Creche	2,833	2,823	2,835	2,923	2,928	2,935
Primary	9,173	8,910	8,998	8,744	8,624	8,607
Secondary	7,852	7,756	7,852	7,542	7,487	7,221
Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)	1,837	1,931	2,217	2,130	2,310	2,551
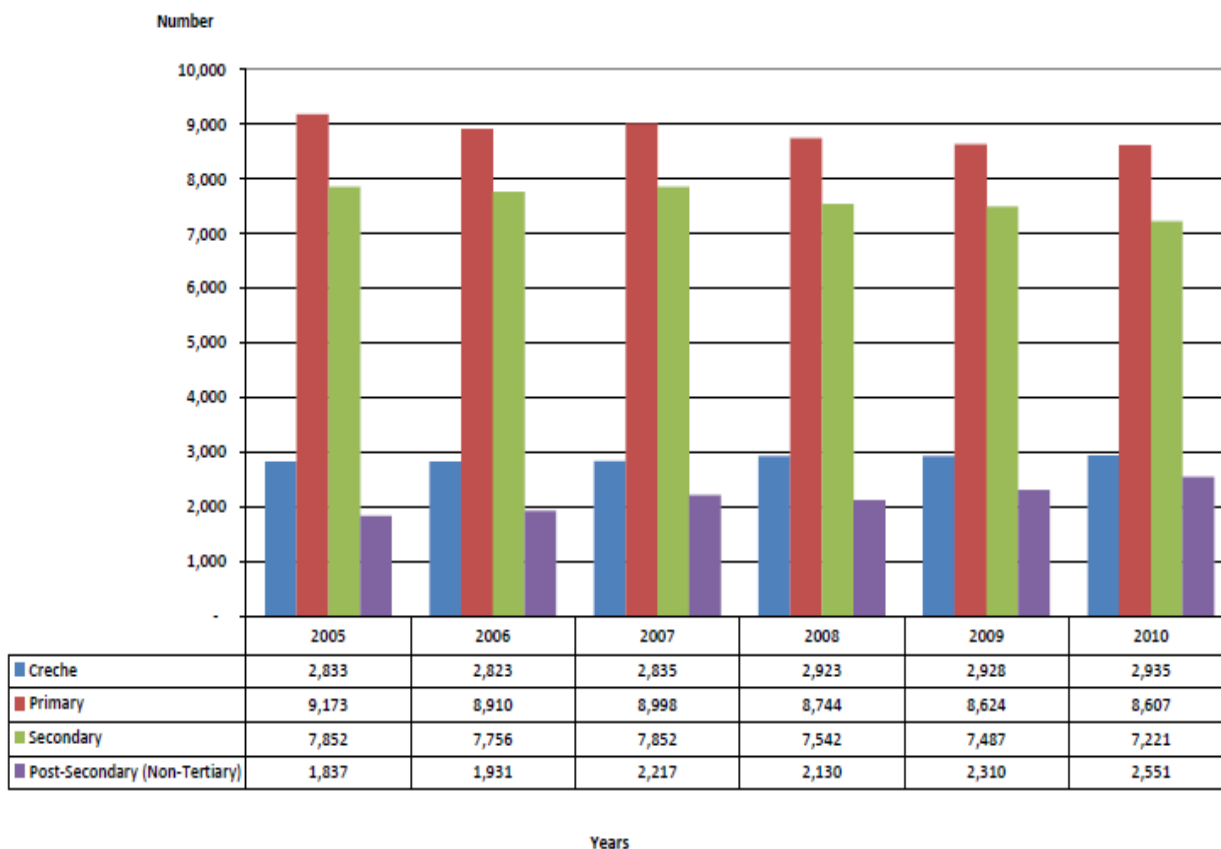
Years

(NBS, 2010, p. 148) **Illustration 8: School enrolment in Seychelles by level (2005-2010)**

Créche

Education in a créche or pre-school is not part of compulsory schooling in Seychelles. Still some 85 per cent of all children aged 3.5 to 5 attend the two years that are free of charge, in one of the 33 public or 27 private facilities. The latter take on children from the age of 2 months (Purvis, 2004, p.47).

Primary

Primary education is compulsory for all children therefore attendance is at 100 per cent. Students are taught in Creole, which is the mother tongue for almost all Seychellois. As they progress, the language of instruction is shifted to English after four years and French is added as a second language. Primary education is based on a broad curriculum and its six years are structured in three 2-year cycles. There are currently 26 primary schools across the Archipelago as well as three private schools (Ibid.).

A 'School for the Exceptional Child' provides access to education for students with more severe degrees of disability. Its duration is from the age of 5 until 14. In some cases students remain beyond the age of 15. As schooling in Seychelles is designed to be as integrative as possible, children with slighter disabilities are usually placed into general schooling if possible (SMoE, 1999, p.16).

Since 1981, Seychelles provides a literacy program for adults on the community level. A center for adult learning and distance education is placed within the Ministry of Education (SMoE, 1999, p.15).

Secondary

As can be seen in the illustration above, secondary education in Seychelles lasts a compulsory four years and a maximum of five years. Students attend one of the ten secondary institutions [94 per cent enrolment] or one of the two private schools [4 per cent]. Since the secondary schools are set up regionally, they cater for a large number of students, about 700 to 1000 at each school. Drop-out rates are relatively low, estimates range between ten to 20 students every year. There is no statistical evidence but Purvis states that according to the information from locals, the most prevalent reasons for a drop-out are underachievement, drug abuse and pregnancy (p.48). A program was introduced to take care of drop-out students until they are

15, the age that marks the end of compulsory education. Also there are some students who leave secondary school after four years when compulsory schooling ends. The secondary curriculum is based on an option system consisting of core academic subjects and technical combinations (Purvis, 2004, pp.47-48). To progress into post-secondary education, which is only possible after five years of secondary, learners had to undergo two different assessment modes until 2004. Firstly, there were the national examinations, which were locally designed. The second were the Cambridge 'O'-levels. This double examination process has been replaced by the 'International General Certificate of Secondary Education' (IGCSE) as requirement for the entry into post-secondary education (Purvis, 2004, p.50).

Post-secondary

Around 70 per cent of secondary students enroll into full-time post-secondary education as the entry is competitive. The remaining students are left with part-time programs or possible employment (Ibid.). There are different institutions in post-secondary education that mostly offer 1- to 4-year training programs in different areas:

Seychelles Polytechnic

National Institute of Education (NIE)

Maritime Training Centre (MTC)

National Institute for Health & Social Studies (NIHSS)

International School

Seychelles Hospitality & Tourism Training College (SHTTC)

Seychelles Agricultural and Horticultural Training Centre (Ex-Farmers Training Centre (FTC)

Visual Arts Area (Ex-National College of the Arts (NCA)

School of Advanced Level Studies (Ex-Academic Area - "A" levels)

Seychelles Institute of Technology (Ex-Industrial Training Centre)

(NBS, 2010, p.149)

Unfortunately, the different post-secondary institutions face several common problems, for instance shortages in staff at teaching and management level and only limited capacity to provide in-house professional development of staff. Resources for the delivered courses are often scarce and difficulties arise with the development of curricula. Until recently all institutions followed their own strategies as a national regulatory framework or standards are missing and provision is characterized by fragmentation (Purvis, 2004, p.50).

Tertiary/Higher Education

The Seychelles University Foundation (SUF) was established in 2007 with the mandate to take on the project of a University for Seychelles. In accordance with a strategic plan, the first campus facilities were finished for the first student take-in in October 2009. Currently only Seychellois students, to whom private sector scholarships are available, are admitted to the University of Seychelles (UniSey) since the number of courses offered is yet limited. The degree programs can be completed in Business Administration and Computer Information Systems additionally there are some Foundation or Access Programs. It is planned to introduce further UniSey programs in the fields of Computing, Education, Environmental Science, Tourism, the Humanities and Arts as well as Masters and Doctorates (UniSey, 2011). The degree programs are offered through the 'International Programme' of the University of London (LU). That means that enrolled students receive their learning material from the 'International Programme Colleges' of the LU. Due to this circumstance, UniSey courses do not differ from those at the LU. UniSey students attend lectures, seminars and tutorials at the Seychelles campus and are mainly responsible to local academic staff. However, finals and examinations are marked by staff at the LU (UniSey, 2011).

As can be seen, even with the existence of the new UniSey, academic opportunities in Seychelles are limited. Therefore students did and still do resort to overseas institutions. Distance learning programs or taught courses can be pursued at several Universities, e.g. in France, Australia, UK or India (Purvis, 2004, p.48).

The Seychelles 'National Human Resource Development Council' (NHRDC) launched a website in 2007, where students receive information about other scholarships available for the study in e.g. Russia, China, Cuba, Canada and UK in various subjects (NHRDC, 2011).

4.3.3 Education issues

Some of the difficulties in the Seychellois educational system have already been mentioned in the paragraphs above. Others need to be mentioned at this point.

For instance some concern can be raised in regard to post-secondary education. During the period from 2005 to 2010, the number of students enrolled in post-secondary education was

less than half the number of students at secondary level. In 2010, most post-secondary students were enrolled at the Seychelles Institute of Technology [573], the Seychelles Hospitality & Tourism Training College [456], the National Institute of Education [389] or the Seychelles Polytechnic [357 total, either in Business or Visual Arts] (NBS, 2010, p.149).

The relatively small numbers in training institutions probably result from the low appreciation of technical or applied subjects in secondary schooling. This is although the 1990s educational reforms foresaw a change in the curriculum to broaden the range of available subjects, including a combination of technical and academic subjects. However, the majority of students stick to the traditional academic subjects, because they want to sit for the ICGSE examinations at the end of the 5-year secondary cycle. The focus in ICGSE examinations clearly lies on academic performance. Often, students who decide for technical or applied subjects are those with lower attainment levels, therefore these subjects are stigmatized to be for the students who are less strong academically (Purvis, 2004, p.49).

Another issue in Seychelles is the supply of teaching staff. Although the situation has slightly improved during the last years- from 1600 teachers in 2004 to 1739 in 2010- teaching still seems to be an unpopular professional choice. The rate of ten to eleven per cent of expatriates among Seychellois teaching staff remained stable during the last two decades; the latest statistic of 2010 shows a ratio of 1.570:169 (Purvis, 2004, p.49, NBS, 2010, p.154). In addition to the quantity issue there is also a quality issue. A lot of teachers are not particularly trained to teach. In 2010, there were 146 teachers with a non-education diploma or degree, 336 only held a certificate in education and 149 had no certification at all [the numbers are totals for all schools across all education levels] (NBS, 2010, p.153). Also teaching throughout the system tends to be teacher centered and not very differentiated (Purvis, 2004, p.50).

This also mirrors another problem: As has been said, the Seychellois educational system aims at comprehensiveness and integration. The approach appears reasonable in theory but turns out to be rather problematic in practice. Purvis (2004) points out, that schools have to cater for a very wide range of abilities, especially at secondary level. Individual capacities of students and learning difficulties are not sufficiently taken into account. What adds to this circumstance is the fact that students progress from one grade to the other automatically, no matter how they perform. There is also a significant gap between the attainment of girls and

boys in most of the Seychellois schools (p.49). To take on the difficulties of varying attainment levels, a policy has been introduced suggesting to 'stream' students into ability groups after 4 years of primary school and at the upper secondary level (Purvis, 2004, p.49). It is questionable if this categorization eventually supports stigmatization and prevents the chance for individual students to catch up with his/her academic development.

Lastly, most countries with a colonial heritage struggle with language policy, which is also the case in Seychelles. The reforms in the 1990s led to the introduction of the mother tongue Creole as language of instruction for the first four years at primary level. Afterwards, still persisting difficulties arose because of a lack of adequate teaching materials and of teacher training in the native language. Since English and French are also studied "[t]he primary school curriculum tends towards language overload […]." (Ibid.).

The Education Reform Action Plan

In July 2008, an independent consultant presented the results of a previously conducted review of the Seychellois educational system. This review led to the decision to form a 'National Education and Training Strategy Committee' (NETSC) in August of the same year. The NETSC was given the mandate to develop a road-map towards reforming the education and training delivery in Seychelles (SMoE, 2009, p.2). The goal was to come up with a feasible plan for the creation of a

"[…] high quality education and human resources development system that remains responsive to national development needs and which enables learners at all levels to achieve their potential." (Ibid.).

In cooperation with several working groups and stakeholder representation the NETSC submitted an 'Education Reform Action Plan' in December 2008. The Plan comprised thirteen "critical areas for reform" as well as recommendations and reform targets (SMoE, 2009, p.2). Seychellois president Micheal himself chose five out of the thirteen areas for reform as fields of priority:
• "Providing for the Diversity of Educational Needs and National Development
    Priorities";
• "Guaranteeing Quality Education";
• "Improving the Quality of Teachers";

• "Improving the Governance of Educational Institutions";

• "Creating Responsible and Empowered Students"; (SMoE, 2009, p.3).

For each priority field a task force was set up and asked to develop strategies and a timeframe for the required reform activities. Additionally, an 'Education Reform Oversight Committee' (EDROC) was formed in March 2009 as a supervisory body to the task forces. The EDROC was also given the task to develop a new Education Reform Action Plan, exclusively for the five priority fields. The EDROC's Plan was submitted in August 2009 and implementation of educational reform is ongoing in 2011 (SMoE, 2009, p.3, EDROC, 2009).

4.4 Road to the Seychelles qualifications framework

The Jafta report

The first step towards a NQF for Seychelles was taken in 1999. Education researcher Corneels Jafta from the Polytechnic of Namibia was asked by the Seychelles' Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development to conduct a study[20] to determine the feasibility of a qualifications framework for the country (Keevy, 2008, p.1). Jafta's recommendations should prove to be influential for Seychelles' framework policy. He suggested that: (i) A comprehensive framework be developed; (ii) that a clear separation between the role of those responsible for standards-setting and that of providers would be needed; (iii) that one body be established with comprehensive NQF responsibility; (iv) that it would be important to limit the number of bodies in charge of NQF development and implementation to only the necessary number (Ibid., p.3). After the 'Jafta report' was published in 1999, human resource capacity for the NQF task started to be built in the same year, partly[21] funded by the Seychellois government (SQA, n.d., p.2). Accordingly, the Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) states that "It has been national policy since 2000 to develop a National Qualifications Framework […]" (n.d., p.1).

The SQA Act

The most significant step towards the Seychellois NQF was the 'Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act' [SQA Act] in 2005, passed by the President and the National Assembly. The

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[20] Unfortunately Jafta's study is not available from the internet.
[21] 'Partly' refers to the fact, that later the Canadian government provided financial support, as will be seen below.

Act serves as the legal basis for the establishment of a Qualifications Authority and thus for the setting up of a national qualifications framework for Seychelles.

International involvement

In 2000, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) launched a project called 'Programme de Renforcement Institutionnel en Matière Technologique en Afrique Francophone' (PRIMTAF) in Seychelles to assist the Ministry of Education and Youth with the implementation of a

"[…] competency-based approach at post secondary level as a means of standardizing programme development and leading the way to the establishment of a national accreditation process." (Purvis, 2004, p.51)

With this competency-based approach the need for a qualifications framework apparently increased. Canada also contributed financial resources to fund study visits and consultancies related to framework development (SQA, n.d., p.2). Consequently, there have been workshops for the Seychellois "core framework team" concerning NQF development at the Qualifications Authorities in Mauritius [November 2003] and South Africa [March 2004] (SQA, n.d.).

In 2006, a 'National Conference on the Framework' was held in Seychelles with the participation of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), by whom it was stressed, among other things, that enough time should be taken for NQF conceptualization, that donor funding should gradually be substituted by funding from the Government and that stakeholders should be placed at the heart of NQF development and implementation (Keevy, 2008, p.4). Another workshop, for which no date is given, took place at the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) under the topic of recognition of prior learning (RPL) (SQA, n.d.).

A work attachment for SQA staff at the South African Qualifications Authority took place in August 2007 under the theme of quality assurance. In the same year, the 'International Vocational and Training Association (IVETA) Conference' [May] and the 'Qualifications Africa Conference' in September 2007 were attended by SQA representatives (SQA, 2008). In 2008, the Seychelles Qualifications Authority held a stakeholder conference at which the

Seychellois NQF was launched. However, the framework's implementation process is currently ongoing as is outlined below.

4.5 Analyzing NQF policy

The structure of this chapter is based on the leading questions which have been presented in Chapter 2.

Who were the policy transfer agents?

Based on the information provided in 5.3 a classification of the transfer agents involved in NQF policy development in Seychelles looks as follows:
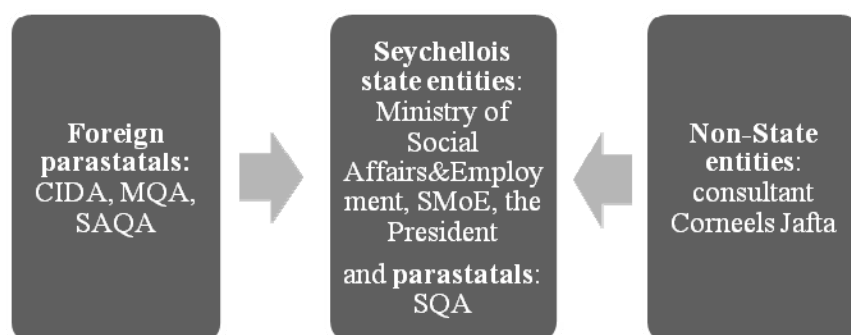

Illustration 9: Classification of policy transfer agents- NQF Seychelles

How did the policy transfer take place?

It has been described in Chapter 2 that policy transfer commonly happens in an 'enabling environment', such as within national or supranational organizations, policy networks or through consulting, depending on those involved in the transfer process. In the case of the Seychellois NQF it is suggested, that the outset for policy transfer was the 'Jafta report'. Another trigger was the Canadian PRIMTAF project, which led to the perceived need for a framework in which the competency-based post-secondary qualifications could be integrated. The promotion of a NQF peaked when Seychelles started to collaborate with the SAQA and MQA to gain expertise in framework development. In 2007, SAQA was even contracted for a year to provide assistance in capacity building for the Seychelles NQF.

The collaboration between Seychellois governmental representatives, staff of the 'core framework team' [later the SQA] and the SAQA and MQA obviously led to the formation of a policy network which provided the enabling environment for the exchange of information, experience and expertise. This network is meant to persist at least in the near future as the

SQA and the SAQA and the SQA and the MQA have signed a memorandum of understanding in 2007 for the duration of five years. The purposes of these memoranda include:

"Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in regard to NQF development: quality assurance, standards setting, recognition and evaluation of qualifications, recognition of prior learning;"

"Assistance in the provision of NQF related training;"

"Assistance in the planning, development and execution of projects to do with National Qualifications Framework and education and training in general;" (SQA, 2007, p.2)

The conferences held in 2006 and 2008 in Seychelles as well as those attended in 2007 represent another likely stage for exchange and collaboration22.

What was transferred?

Firstly, the workshops held offer information about what parts of NQF policy are likely to have been transferred, meaning RPL and quality assurance measures, although the degree of transfer is not clear. Furthermore, the SAQA (2011) states that

"[…] SAQA and the SQA continue to enjoy a close relationship with specific activities in the areas of the evaluation of foreign qualifications, databases and provisioning in the health sector […]".

which suggests that policy transfer is ongoing. Probably underpinned by Namibian NQF experience, Jafta's recommendations as a consultant have had a considerable impact on the design of the Seychellois framework, most importantly the development of a comprehensive framework and the attribution of comprehensive responsibility to the SQA, both of which is true for the Namibian NQF and the Namibian QA respectively. The SQA also states that "[q]ualification types [of the NQF] follow an international orientation (as does much of the map)" (SQA, n.d., p.4).

Why was the NQF introduced?

Surprisingly, no statement has been made to explicitly explain the reasons for the development of a national qualifications framework for Seychelles. However, some reasons can be deduced from official documents concerning the NQF.

The development of a transnational framework for the SADC region apparently fostered the commitment to develop the Seychelles' framework, since the SADCQF is based on NQF development in SADC member states. An underlying notion of being part of an international 'trend' seems to be another rationale for the introduction of an NQF. (SQA, n.d., p.1).

As the tertiary and higher education sector is too small to offer a comprehensive spectrum of qualifications, many Seychellois students obtain qualifications overseas or via foreign distance learning institutions. This circumstance certainly contributed to the development of a NQF, as it is supposed to be a register also for foreign qualifications (SQA, 2008).

Based on the policy guidelines for the NQF which concern (i) quality assurance, (ii) recognition of foreign qualifications, (iii) evaluation of existing qualifications, (iv) standard setting and (v) recognition of prior learning (Ibid.), Seychellois education stakeholders seem to perceive the need for improvement in these areas and a NQF as a policy instrument is obviously seen as the means to this end.

What is the legal basis of the framework?

The basic policy for the introduction of a framework in Seychelles is the 'Qualifications Authority Act' of 2005. Based on the Act the SQA developed NQF regulations comprising the policy guidelines for the five areas mentioned above, for qualification types and their structures, for the design of the NQF as well as for fees and appeals. These regulations serve as a subsidiary law to the SQA Act and came into force at the beginning of 2009 and officially launched the implementation of the Seychellois national qualifications framework (SQA, n.d., SQA, 2009, p.3).

The SQA is the main executive body concerning the framework. The SQA Act determines that the institution is structured as follows: The SQA is headed by a Board consisting of six to thirteen members who stay in office for a three year period. Since the SQA is generally responsible to the Ministry of Education, the Minister is in charge of the appointment of the Board's members. Moreover the Minister in consultation with the Board appoints an

Executive Director who as the "chief accounting officer" is obligated to manage the affairs of the SQA.

A secretariat and committees with special tasks complete the SQA's structure as supporting units for the Executive Director (SQA, 2008). Funding for the Qualifications Authority is delegated by the Seychelles National Assembly, third-party funds such as donations or grants and of course fees are charged for the public services performed by the SQA (SQA Act, 2005).

What is the purpose of the NQF, what are the policy objectives, principles?
According to the definition by the Seychelles Qualifications Authority the NQF in Seychelles is "a framework for the development, recognition and award of qualifications based on standards of knowledge, skills and competence to be acquired by learners." (SQA, n.d., p.2). In other words the framework is supposed to provide

"Quality assured, nationally recognized consistent training standards and qualifications;"
"Recognition and credit for knowledge and skills acquired ;" (Ibid.).

These purposes are underpinned by several objectives, for instance the promotion of an integrated approach to education and training. An integrated approach would be the result of the comprehensive recognition of qualifications and of learning, while occupational qualifications are equal to other qualifications (Ibid.).

Additionally, the NQF aims at the development and regulation of qualifications through the utilization of unit standards linked to the workplace and to labor market requirements. Finally, the registration of qualifications on the framework is supposed to lead to a "coherent learning system" which would produce qualifications that are nationally and internationally portable and comparable, and therefore increase the mobility of learners (SQA, n.d., p.2).
What are the architectural features of the NQF?

To answer the question in regard to the design of the national qualifications framework the necessary prerequisite is to understand how qualifications are conceptualized in the context of the Seychellois NQF. In the Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act of 2005, qualifications are defined as the "formal recognition of a learner's achievement of the required number and

range of credits or other requirements at a specified level of the qualifications framework" (MoE, 2005, p.2). Thus, qualifications on the NQF are structured according to the framework's levels and are achieved through credit accumulation, as is described below.

Qualifications are either based on unit standards or not based on unit standards. Unit standards are categorized into (i) "essential unit standards", referring to the generic knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for all qualifications, namely "Communication, ICT, Life Skills and Numeracy"; (ii) "specific unit standards", referring to the specific knowledge, skills attitudes and values desired as a basis for the qualification; (iii) "elective unit standards", referring to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which are chosen additionally (SQA, 2008, p.4). Those qualifications that are based on unit standards are obtained by the combination of:

A minimum of 60 per cent of unit standards at the registered level of the qualification or above it;

A minimum of 40 per cent of "specific unit standards";

Have to comprise all four "essential unit standards";

Once it has been registered on the framework, a qualification and its unit standards are subject to a review every five years. Qualifications that have already existed up to five years prior to the introduction of the NQF have to be evaluated by the SQA in order to be registered (SQA, 2008, pp.4-5).

Interestingly, the SQA refers to the NQF as a 'qualifications map' (SQA, n.d.). This nomenclature accounts for the NQF's function as a guide or reference to learners and deliberately results in its simplification. The 'qualifications map' for Seychelles is a comprehensive framework and consist of ten levels comprising primary schooling to doctorate degrees.

NQF Level	Qualification type				Notional hours (minimum)
10	Doctorate Degree				3600
9	Masters Degree				1600
8	Post-graduate Certificate Post-graduate Diploma				1200
7	Bachelors Degree				3600
6			National Advanced Diploma		1200
5			National Diploma		3600
4	High School Certificate (A Levels)			National Advanced Certificate	2400
3					National Certificate	1200
2	Secondary certificate (IGCSE)				
1	Primary certificate				

(SQA, n.d., p.5)

Illustration 10: The Seychelles NQF

The hierarchy of the ten levels is built up on the increasing cognitive challenge and on the development of practical skills and the degree of autonomy of the learner. Each level is described by level descriptors [see Annex] which are

"[…] statements used to describe a hierarchy of learning outcomes in terms of reasoning and problem solving, autonomy and responsibility, knowledge, and degree of complexity of tasks." (SQA, n.d., p.3)

Despite its comprehensive scope, the map is aimed specifically at post-secondary, further and higher education. The SQA argues that the national curriculum already acts as a framework for primary and secondary education therefore the institution is only concerned with qualifications and not with curriculum, schooling or funding (SQA, n.d., p.4).

As can be seen, notional learning hours are attributed to each level of the map. Ten hours of notional learning time equal one credit and any qualification in post-secondary, further and higher education comprises a minimum of 120 credits (SQA, n.d., p.4).

How is the NQF implemented?

The question about how the national qualifications framework in Seychelles is being implemented is best answered by outlining its governance and the responsibilities of the Qualifications Authority as well as stakeholder involvement.

In his feasibility study of 1999, Jafta had proposed to attribute comprehensive responsibility to the then to be established Qualifications Authority. As the SQA was set up on the basis of the SQA Act in 2005, Jafta's proposal was put into practice as the SQA was indeed given a comprehensive mandate: The SQA developed the policy guidelines for standards setting in 2008 and it is responsible for the registration of qualifications and their unit standards on the NQF on the basis of the criteria the SQA has set (SQA, 2008, p.5).

Quality assurance policy has also been developed in 2008 containing the SQA's criteria for the accreditation of education and training providers, of qualifications and their unit standards. If the criteria are met, a certificate for accreditation is given out for five years. There is the possibility to obtain a provisional certificate of accreditation if not all of the criteria are met. The provisional status is granted no longer than two years. After accreditation of a provider or qualification, the SQA is in charge of monitoring the compliance with the accreditation policy. All education and training programs based on unit standards and qualifications registered on the framework have to be validated on the basis of SQA criteria (Ibid., p.6).

Moreover, the Qualifications Authority alone is in charge of the recognition of foreign qualifications and the recognition of prior learning according to the policy guidelines it has set in 2008. The conditions for RPL are the following: If the credits that are awarded through RPL make up more than 25 per cent of the entire qualification, the SQA is supposed to collaborate with those partners where prior learning took place. Also the amount of credits awarded through PRL should not account for more than 50 per cent of the entire qualification requirements (Ibid., p.7).

Besides these extensive obligations, the Seychelles Qualifications Authority has the responsibility to provide information about the qualifications available in the Republic on the national and international level (Ibid., p.7).

Stakeholder involvement

Despite the comprehensive mandate of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority, the participation of stakeholders, namely "industry, training institutions, professional bodies and other relevant stakeholders", is sought at almost all implementation levels: For standard setting, for the validation of programs, for quality assurance and for the accreditation of education and training providers and qualifications. Stakeholders are also expected to help the SQA decide which "professional competencies" should be included in a qualification (SQA, n.d., p. 8, Ibid., pp.5-7).

It is further stated that the SQA "[…] may delegate its authority to the Department of Education and/or to individual public or private providers to award national qualifications." (Ibid., p.6). According to the SQA's website (n.d.), these are the local partners currently involved in "qualifications related work":
Ministries and Parastatals: Seychelles Port Authority; Department of Employment; Seychelles Tourism Board; Centre for Skills Development; Seychelles Licensing Authority; Ministry of Education; Department of Public Administration; NHRDC National HR Development Council

Public Institutions and Sections offering training: Maritime Training Centre (MTC); National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS); National Institute of Education (NIE); Seychelles Agricultural Horticultural Training Centre (SAHTC); Seychelles Polytechnic; Seychelles Institute of Technology (SIT); Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA); Seychelles Institute of Management (SIM); Seychelles University Foundation; Seychelles Fire Brigade; Seychelles Police Academy

Private Providers: VCS; International School; Independent School; First Care; Ecole Francaise des Seychelles; Cyberwave computing 2000; Computing and Additional Learning; Blyss Consulting; United States of America Institute of Medicine (USAIM)

Professional Bodies: Seychelles Nursing and Midwives Council; Seychelles Library Association; Seychelles Medical and Dental Association Council; Red Cross Society of Seychelles; Seychelles Pharmaceutical Association

NGOs and other stakeholders: LUNGOS; Nature Seychelles; Seychelles Island Foundation; Chamber of Commerce & Industry

What progress has been made concerning the NQF's implementation to date?

The evaluation of existing qualifications has been delayed as education and training providers were not able to meet the deadline for the submission of their qualifications for the registration on the framework. The SQA had met with the majority of the Seychellois providers in April 2010 to inform them about the necessary steps to be taken for a full validation of their courses, which has not been obtained by any provider, yet. As of April 2011, 14 Advanced Certificates altogether had been submitted by the Seychelles Institute of Technology, the Seychelles Polytechnic, the SAHTC and the MTC respectively, as well as one Certificate of the University of Seychelles and five Diplomas of the NIHSS and the Seychelles Polytechnic (SQA, 2010, p.5, 2011, p.4).

The recognition of foreign qualifications had started even before the regulations for the NQF were finalized in January 2009. 35 qualifications had been evaluated until December 2009, 27 until May 2010 and until April 2011 25 foreign qualifications had been evaluated and certificated and true copies of 650 qualifications have been made (SQA, 2009, p.7, 2010, p.7, 2011, p.5).

The SQA is now also collaborating with the NHRDC in advising the institution about the accreditation status of foreign qualifications. The NHRDC therefore obtains information about foreign qualifications prior to sending Seychellois abroad to achieve tertiary or higher education qualifications (SQA, 2009, p.7).

In regard to the recognition of prior learning, a final trial has been started in Carpentry and Joinery at the Seychelles Institute of Technology. The purpose of the trial is to optimize RPL policy in order to launch it nationally as 2011 progresses. Another trial had been started in 2010 concerning an Advanced Certificate in Dental Assisting and a Diploma in Occupational Therapy. At the end of 2010, the SQA, the Department of Employment and the NHRDC had come together in an 'Inter-Organisational Working Group' to develop an 'Action Plan' for RPL comprising priority areas for RPL, required standards for the process and strategies to raise awareness about the matter (SQA, 2011, p.6).

The latter point is already taken on by the SQA: Within a 'RPL Sensitation Campaign', SQA representatives held presentations to senior management officials in the Government and

parastatal sector and to human resource managers in the country in 2010. A DVD with information on RPL has been compiled for stakeholders and the Seychellois public and is available since May 2011 (Ibid., p.10).

The development of standards had already started in late 2008 and at the end of 2009, 304 unit standards had been submitted for standardization and some 13 courses had been standardized. 2009 also saw the establishment of a new 'Core Standard Committee' within the SQA which is in charge of evaluating, correcting and editing the submitted standards (SQA, 2009, p.3).

Ongoing in 2010 the process was expected to pick up pace in 2011 as the industrial sectors were to submit their standards and the standardization of courses of post-secondary was to be finalized by the middle of the year. Until April 2011, 32 standards existed and were ready for approval, most of them from the public education and training providers. Standards for Nursing, Fashion and Textile and for a Diploma in Nursing had already been approved (SQA, 2011, p.6).

Further, the SQA has begun to align sector specific trades qualifications with the national qualifications framework. As a first step in this direction ICT qualifications are subject to alignment with the help of an expert through the inspiration from international good practice and in collaboration with the governmental Department of Information and Communications Technology (SQA, 2010, p.8).

The implementation of quality assurance policy has been the subject to delays since the enforcement of the NQF regulations in early 2009. Since SQA had perceived a lack of effort by education and training providers to develop an "internal quality culture" a workshop was held to train "Internal Quality Assurance personnel" of several institutions for this pending task. Attesting a lack of effort on the providers' side accounts for the importance of stakeholder involvement in the NQF implementation process, with the SQA stating that "[…] quality assurance should be an internal objective of all institutions […]" (2009, p.3).

However, policy guidelines, criteria and indicators as well as self assessment tools for institutions are ready to use since the beginning of 2009. In 2010, a 'Quality Assurance Committee' (QA-Committee) was formed within the SQA with the mandate to oversee the

accreditation of institutions and the validation of qualifications. Consequently, the evaluation of qualifications is now done by a sub-committee of the QA-Committee (SQA, 2010, p.5).

Meanwhile the Seychelles Qualifications Authority continued its international cooperation for instance in the form of a visit to Universities in London and Manchester with the focus to introduce SQA staff to the requirements for quality assurance at the higher education level in early 2009; a staff attachment to the Namibian Qualifications Authority in November 2009; the part taking of the SQA Executive Director on a workshop on quality assurance held in Nigeria organized by the Commonwealth of Learning; the attendance of the 'World Conference on Adult Education' in December 2009; the attendance of a conference on RPL which was held by the South African QA; the attendance of the Sixth Pan Commonwealth Conference on open Learning in India in December 2010; a capacity building exchange in form of an internship of the SQA's quality assurance officer at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency in November 2010; the recruitment of a Quality Assurance consultant from Botswana for a fact-finding mission in February and April 2011 (SQA, 2009, p.12, 2011, p.4., pp.7-9).

Further, the SQA has reported progress concerning the

"[…] development of a national electronic management system which will capture qualifications related data for all learners and providers in Seychelles" (SQA, 2011, p.9).

The system that had been implemented in 2009 already administrates unit standards, qualifications, the evaluation of foreign qualifications and of existing qualifications. In 2011 RPL, quality assurance, course validation as well as the records of learners and their achievements are to be incorporated in the system (Ibid.).

What is the impact of the NQF?

Due to its rather short period of existence, an account of impacts of the NQF for Seychelles could only be vague or speculative. It might be more accurate to consider some of the implications which can be deduced from the implementation progress made so far:

Stakeholder involvement apparently is a major strategy for the implementation of the NQF and existing policies and practices in qualifications provision are substituted by NQF legislation (SQA, n.d., p.7).

Existing qualifications need to be aligned in order to be registered on the framework. This puts some pressure on providers who struggle with the redesign of their qualifications to give

them the desired format. It could be the case that this leads to the development of new qualifications rather than to the submission of qualifications that face lengthy adjustment procedures.

Quality assurance is mostly done through the validation of qualifications. Validation means that there are the necessary resources and policies in place for learners to successfully obtain the qualification. This could cause some difficulties for institutions which do not dispose of enough funding and/or resources.

The SQA activities also seem to uncover weaknesses in the system, for instance:

"It has been found through this exercise [concerning standardization] that a large proportion of practicing hairdressers will in the future need re-training to bring them up to the level expected as the majority do not hold a suitable qualification for the work that they are currently doing." (2010, p.8).

"[…] some concerns have arisen caused by the lack of proper screening of foreign qualifications before holders of these credentials are employed." (2010, p.6)

"[…] SQA also wants the professional bodies to play a more proactive role where education and training is concerned […]." (2011, p.3)

"Research undertaken by the SQA over the year has helped to protect Seychellois learners from falling prey to degree and diploma mills, especially in the area of distance learning […]" (2009, p.10)

Employers might adjust their "schemes of service" around NQF qualifications (SQA, n.d., p.7). And finally, international collaboration and involvement have been quite extensive at NQF development and implantation stages and there is evidence, such as the Memoranda of Understanding or membership of supranational organizations that this is likely to continue

5 Mauritius

5.1 Geography and history

The Republic of Mauritius is located east of Madagascar and north east of the island Réunion. Surrounded by the Indian Ocean, Mauritius consists of several islands, namely Rodrigues, Saint Brandon and the Agalega Islands, and comprises a geographical area of 2.040 sq km. The Republic's main and biggest island obviously is Mauritius (CIA WF, 2011).

The first known to occasionally visit the Mauritian Islands had been Arab sailors who put down Mauritius under the Arabic name of 'Dina Arobi' on maps of the early 16th century. In 1511, Portuguese sailors landed on Mauritian shores and on their behalf named Mauritius 'Cirne', a name that was abandoned later as Portuguese navigator Don Pedro Mascarenhas named the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion the 'Mascarenes'. However, the Portuguese never settled on the islands (Republic of Mauritius (RoM), 2005).

The name Mauritius is of Dutch origin: In 1598 Admiral Wybrand Warwyck and his squadron landed on the main island and named it after the then Prince of Holland, Maurice von Nassau. It took another four decades until a first settlement was attempted by the Dutch, it lasted for twenty years and was finally given up in 1710 because it never produced enough goods worth trading. When the Dutch abandoned the Island they had introduced sugar-cane and left deer and domestic animals (Ibid.).

On his way to India, French sailor Guillaume Defresne D'Arsel made Mauritius a French colony in 1715, naming it 'Isle de France'. French settlement did not start until 1721 and was not truly effective until the arrival of the French governor Mahé de La Bourdonnais in 1735. The Governor established the town Port Louis and made it a naval base and ship building center. The French East India Company administered the island until 1767 (Ibid.).

In 1814, the 'Isle de France' was given to the British who had attempted to capture it since 1810. With the French capitulation the Island was renamed Mauritius. British rule brought about significant changes such as the abolition of slavery in 1834. Slaves had been brought to Mauritius by the French, mainly from the African continent and Madagascar. However, the

sugar plantations, the colony's economic backbone, still needed workers, which soon came from India. The Indian immigrants were later joined by Chinese traders (Ibid.).

British colonial administration also resulted in the establishment of the first 'Council of Government' in 1825. From 1886 elections were held but were restricted to those who were proprietors or were within a certain income group. This did not change until 1948 when the right to vote was granted to all adults who had passed a literacy test. In the same year the Council of Government was replaced by a 'Legislative Council' (Ibid.). The first general elections were held in 1959 after the ministerial system was introduced, based on the Constitutional Conferences of 1955 and 1957. Again the right to vote was extended, this time to universal adult suffrage (RoM, 2005).

Independence for Mauritius came in 1968 after the 'Constitutional Conference' of 1965 and after the general elections in 1957 when a new constitution was adopted. It took another twenty-four years, until 1992, for Mauritius to achieve the status of a Republic (Ibid.).

5.2 The socio-economic setting

The Republic's capital Port Louis is located on the main island Mauritius and was home to 149.000 people in 2009 (CIA WF, 2011). As of July 2011, Mauritius' overall population was at 1.286.340 of which 42 per cent lived in urban areas in 2010. The population is distributed across the Mauritian islands as follows: Mauritius 1.248.129 inhabitants, Rodrigues 37.922 and Saint Brandon and Agalega Islands 289 inhabitants (CIA, WF, 2011, RoM, 2011). In 2010, 67.2 per cent of the Mauritian population had been 15 to 59 years old, 21.6 per cent had been under the age of 15 (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2010a, p.8). The census in 2000 revealed a literacy rate23 of 85 per cent for the Mauritian population (CSO, 2010a, p.14).

Due to Mauritius' diverse colonial heritage, its history of slavery and immigration it is now a multicultural and multilingual society and home to the following ethnic groups: Indo-Mauritians [68 per cent], Creoles [27 per cent], Sino-Mauritians [3 per cent] and Franco-Mauritians [2 per cent]. According to the 2000 census, 80.5 per cent had Creole as their mother tongue, 12.1 per cent spoke Indish-Bhojpuri and 3.4 per cent French. English is the official language but spoken as the first language by less than one per cent of the population.

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23 Literacy: Percentage of persons aged 12+ years who can, with understanding, both read and write a simple statement.

The biggest religious groups on the islands are Hindus, Roman Catholics, Muslims and Christians (CIA WF, 2011).

In 2010, Mauritius' GDP was at 299.967 Million Rupees with a per capita GDP of 234.127 Rupees24 (CSO, 2010a, pp. 33-34).

To date, Mauritian exports do not make up for half of the state's imports: In 2010 the total value of exports was 68.86 Million Rupees compared to 135.394 Million Rupees worth of imports (Ibid., p.37).

Major exports consisted for instance of diverse manufactured goods such as clothing and apparel, of food and live animals and other manufactured goods. The main import goods were machinery and transport equipment, mineral fuels, lubricants etc., manufactured goods, food and live animals (Ibid., pp.37-38).

The Mauritian labor force counted 581.300 people in 2010 with a total employment rate in the same year at 558.100 [figure includes foreign workers]. Unemployment was at eight per cent in the second Quarter of 2011 (CSO, 2010a, p.17, 2011, p.1).

Interestingly, the Mauritian economy is divided into three [formal] sectors. The first or primary sector is the sugar cane industry which gave work to 45.100 people in 2010. The secondary sector counted 171.800 employees for example in Manufacturing, Electricity and Water Supply or Construction. 341.200 people worked in the third sector e.g. in Trade or the Hotel and Restaurant business, in Transport, Storage & Communications, in Finances, Real Estate, Renting or were in Business and other services (Ibid., p.17).

5.3 Education in Mauritius

5.3.1 History

Until the French Revolution took its course from 1789, schooling in the then French crown colony Mauritius was not an issue. However, the Revolution's ideas such as active promotion of education by the state and widening access to education eventually spread to the colonies. The colonial administrators introduced general primary education, with primary schools run

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[24] Both figures measured at market prices meaning GDP at basic prices plus the taxes on products.

as private institutions. Slaves and colored people were excluded from schooling (University of Mauritius, n.d.).

Secondary education at the newly implemented 'l'École Centrale' remained a privilege for the white elite. Later l'École Centrale was restructured and became a 'Lycée' that also provided primary schooling. At the time only some primary schools started to allow attendance of colored students. From 1815 colored children could attend school in Port Louis when Reverend Lebrun set up free a number of primary schools. Until the abolition of slavery in Mauritius in 1834, education of slaves was the subject of vehement resistance by the white population with the exception of very few landowners (Ibid.).

When immigration from India started in the 1830s schooling was not available to Indian children. As the Mauritian colonial government started to give out aid-grants to schools run by the Church and although the number of primary schools grew still only a little more than one tenth of the 60.000 Indian children went to school by 1908. Many of them had to work at an early age, were not familiar with English as the language of instruction and above all, the system faced a lack of teachers. From the early 20th century, education increasingly became a concern for the colonial administrators (Ibid.).

The 1940s marked a fundamental change in the schooling landscape of Mauritius as educational policy was reformulated: Primary education saw an expansion with the setting up of more schools in rural areas and more importantly, primary education was made free of charge, which means in Mauritian terms that Government pays for school fees and administrative costs. The Education Act of 1957 determined educational provision under British colonial rule (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), 2005, p.3, UNESCO IBE25, 2006, p. 3).

As Mauritius adopted its Constitution in 1968, responsibility for education was passed to the newly independent state and any discrimination of pupils based on race, faith or sex was prohibited (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.3). From 1977 onwards, education at the secondary and tertiary level was free of charge. Several changes in educational policy were introduced in the 1990s, e.g. education became compulsory through the Education Act of 1993 with pupils

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[25] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Bureau of Education (IBE)

having to stay in education from the age of five until they turned 12 (SACMEQ, 2005, p.3). The Education Act of 1996 [amended in 2001] governs educational provision at all levels. In 2005, compulsory schooling was extended to the age of 16 (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.4).

5.3.2 The current system

Education in Mauritius is under the legislative obligation of the Government or more precisely the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for implementing educational policy and for the organization and infrastructure of the different levels of the educational system. Accordingly, also funding falls under the legislative obligation of the Ministry, therefore the majority of educational institutions is publicly funded. Nonetheless private provision plays a major role in the Mauritian educational system and fee charging schools can be found from the pre-primary to the tertiary sector. Private provision in Mauritius is mainly based on the right for everyone to set up a school which is granted by the Republic's Constitution (University of Mauritius, n.d.).

Mauritius is divided up into five education zones or regions, the island of Mauritius comprising four and Rodrigues the fifth zone. In each region a 'Regional Education Office' (REO) acts as a subdivision of the Ministry of Education. A group of [school] inspectors is attached to all REOs who are in charge of the coordination of the educational activities in the region's schools. Inspectors are selected from the pool of head teachers at the respective region's schools (SACMEQ, 2005, p.11).

In addition to the REOs, a number of different bodies are involved in the administration and management of the educational system: Because of the diversity of public and private providers, the 'National Accreditation and Equivalence Council' (NAEC) oversees that qualifications obtained locally are equivalent. Religious Authorities are of course responsible for the schools falling under their supervision (UNESCO IBE, 2006, pp.3-4).

The 'Mauritius Examinations Syndicate' (MES) is in charge of all examinations at the national level or at school level and also conducts research related to examinations. Curriculum development for the primary and secondary level is carried out by the 'National Centre for Curriculum Research Development' (NCCRD) and the 'Mauritius Institute of Education' (MIE). The NCCRD also produces learning materials and guides for teachers while the MIE is the major institution for the training of teachers at pre-primary, primary and

at secondary level and is responsible for the formulation of educational policies. Adult education and literacy programs are mainly in the hands of NGOs or provided by five special governmental organizations (Ibid., p.4, p.21).

The illustration below shows the pathways within the educational system with each sector and their respective Certification modes.
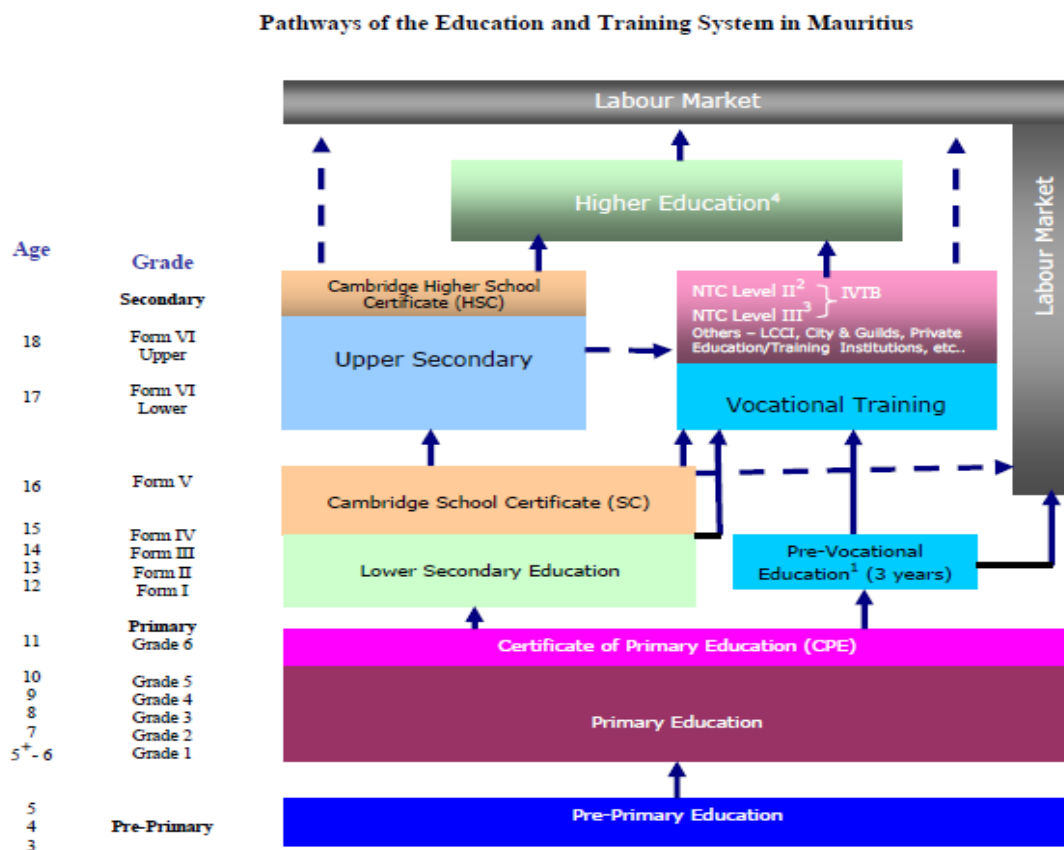
(MoE, 2008, p.26)

Illustration 11:The educational system in Mauritius

The educational system in Mauritius is based on a structure of six years of primary and five years of secondary schooling, hence 11 years which account for the compulsory part of the system. The five years of secondary schooling are followed by two years of higher secondary. After each school level students have to sit for examinations that regulate the progression to the next level.

As has been mentioned, education in Mauritius is free for all learners who attend public schooling institutions. Naturally, costs still occur that have to be paid such as for books,

transport, uniforms and the fees for examinations, all of which can strain the finances of poorer families. To ensure equal opportunities at the outset of education, textbooks at primary level are free to all children since 1989 (SACMEQ, 2005, p.12). The competitiveness in the Mauritian educational environment has also led to the phenomenon of private tuition. If affordable for parents, many students take up this form of extra instruction outside the usual provision (Ibid.).

Pre-primary

Although pre-primary education is not compulsory in Mauritius, almost all children attend some sort of pre-primary education. All children in Mauritius aged four to five also receive a grant by the Government to facilitate access to pre-primary education (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.7). The idea behind Mauritian pre-primary education is to tackle social inequalities by providing equal opportunities during the early years of a child's development (Ministry of Education26 (MoE), 2004, p.3). Pre-primary education takes place in two separate phases, the first one being Early Childhood Development until the age of three, the second being pre-primary education between the ages three to five (UNSECO IBE, 2006, p.5). The pre-primary sector is administered by the 'Early Childhood Care and Education Authority' under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (CSO, 2010b, p.2). In 2010 there were 1.042 schools delivering pre-primary education to 35.139 children (CSO, 2010a, p.12). The vast majority of these schools are on the island of Mauritius, while 33 schools are located in Rodrigues. Most pre-primary institutions were run privately [76 per cent in March 2010], some belonged to government run primary schools [17 per cent] and another seven per cent either belonged to Roman Catholic or Hindu Authorities or were run by local Councils on the Municipal/Village level (CSO, 2010b, p.2). The pre-primary curriculum places an emphasis on language development comprising basic reading and writing skills and creative activities, while further including physical education and mathematics (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.7).

Primary

Primary schooling is compulsory for all children in Mauritius. As of March 2010, there were 305 schools at the primary level, of which 14 were located in Rodrigues. Most schools were Government run while 51 were administered by the Roman Catholic Education Authority, two by the Hindu Education Authority and another 30 were in the hands of private providers (CSO, 2010b, p.2). Enrolment at primary level was at 117.432 in 2010 (CSO, 2010a, p.12).

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[26] The Ministry of Education is also referred to as the Ministry of Education and Human Resources or Ministry of Education and Scientific Research prior to 2001.

Primary education is divided into two cycles of three years each and students progress automatically from one grade to the other. At the end of the six years all students have to sit for the 'Certificate of Primary Education' (CPE). The original purpose of the CPE was to rank students according to their performance in the exam, in order to determine their entry into secondary education where streaming grouped together students based on their ability (SACMEQ, 2005, pp.4-5). 'Sorting out' weaker students had been perceived as a necessity because of the limited number of places in secondary institutions (MoE, 2004, p.5).

In 2001, educational reform finally substituted the contested ranking system with an alphabetical grade system that now enables all children, who achieve the minimum grades in the CPE, to progress into secondary schooling. Those children who do not pass their first attempt in the CPE exam are allowed to repeat the sixth year at primary level and usually retake the CPE exam. In 2010 there have been 4.090 repeaters in Form VI (CSO, 2010b, p.15). Still, some students fail their second attempt and therefore do not attend secondary academic schooling. In that case, an alternative is provided to them in form of the pre-vocational education scheme (SACMEQ; 2005, p.14, MoE, 2004, p.5).

The curriculum for primary education was revised in 2001 and currently consists of eight compulsory subjects in the first primary cycle and of nine in the second cycle in addition to two optional subjects respectively (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.10). At primary and secondary level, teachers are supposed to follow an approach integrating the separate subjects and to support interaction and team work among students, who are in turn expected to take a participative role (Ibid., p.7).

Secondary

Secondary education in Mauritius is separated into two major branches. One branch consists of the mainstream academic provision where 115.003 students were enrolled in 182 schools in 2010 (CSO, 2010a, p.13).

While five institutions were in Rodrigues, 69 out of the 182 schools were led by the Government and the rest run privately, either aided or non-aided. 'Aided' refers to the Government providing grants to private secondary and primary institutions. In all cases private secondary schools are financed or at least co-financed publicly and run either by private organizations or individuals (CSO, 2010b, p.4, UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.7).

The private institutions are responsible to the 'Private Secondary Schools Authority' (PSSA) that operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. In order to be eligible to governmental grants, private secondary schools have to be registered with the PSSA (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.7, p.13).

As educational policy reform in 2001 put an end to ranking on the CPE basis, the face of the secondary sector also changed. Firstly, the sector was regionalized to prevent students from seeking entry only into a few highly demanded secondary schools. Hence secondary attendance is now organized through the residential factor. The number of secondary institutions had to be increased significantly in order to cater for all students (MoE, 2004, p.5, UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.13).

When compulsory schooling was extended to the age of 16 in 2005, this meant that more students would stay on longer. The result was the restructuring of the secondary sector: The secondary cycle now includes 'Form I-V Secondary Schools' and newly established 'Sixth-form Colleges' which are transformed state secondary schools. Admission of the former is administered regionally while for the latter it is done on the national level (UNESCO IBE, 2006, p.13).

Different from the automatic mode in primary schools, secondary students take exams at the end of every year to determine their progression (Ibid., p.12). The secondary curriculum is structured according to the Forms: Between Forms I to III students are taught based on a broad curriculum with a range of academic and practical subjects. From Form IV several options are possible which differ from school to school and include general academics, vocational, commercial, technical and scientific streams (Ibid., p.11). After Form V, secondary students sit for the 'General Certificate of Education' [also known as 'Cambridge School Certificate'], the 'O'-levels. The other cycle enables them to take exams for the 'Cambridge Higher School Certificate', also called 'A'[dvanced]-levels. A-level courses are mainly offered at the Sixth-form Colleges (Ibid., p.11).

The second branch of secondary provision in Mauritius is the pre-vocational scheme which was established in 2001. In 2010 there were 124 schools which delivered pre-vocational courses for 7.442 learners. Five schools were in Rodrigues and 75 of the 124 were private schools, the rest being under the Government's supervision (CSO, 2010b, p.13, CSO 2010a,

p.4). Apart from the five schools that only offer pre-vocational education, pre-vocational 'schools' are mostly separate classes at the lower secondary level which follow a specialized curriculum. The latter is based on the approach of continuous assessment and extra attention by teachers in order to achieve a maximum of competency. Pre-vocational classes cater in large parts for those who failed a second attempt in CPE examination at the end of primary schooling, as the classes are designed to keep these students in education (SACMEQ, 2005, p.14). Prior to the introduction of a pre-vocational scheme "CPE failure" and "double failure" students were only admitted into secondary schooling in small numbers. Now they have the possibility to take a so called 'bridging module' after the three year pre-vocational cycle. By completing the bridging module, vocational courses are available to graduates (MoE, 2004, pp.10-11).

The tertiary sector

The tertiary sector in Mauritius can be divided into three groups: The first group comprises the publicly funded institutions (PFIs) the second are the private institutions and the third group represents participation in overseas programs. Each of the groups includes academic studies as well as vocational education and training.

When gaining independence in 1968, there was only one institution in Mauritius which operated on the tertiary level: The University of Mauritius (UoM) that dates from 1965. Currently, the local tertiary sector includes 11 PFIs, over 50 private providers and 76 bodies awarding qualifications (Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), 2010). The PFIs are: (i) the University of Mauritius (UoM); (ii) the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM); (iii) the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE); (iv) the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI); (vi) the Rabindranath Tagore Institute (RTI); (vii) the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA); (viii) the Fashion and Design Institute (FDI); and the two Polytechnics, namely the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management (SDIM) and the Institut Superieur de Technologie (IST).

In addition to these nine institutions the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) offers vocational training. The Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) also delivers some programs on the tertiary level in several fields (TEC, 2010). The two Mauritian Universities are the only institutions in the PFI group awarding degrees, with the exception of the MIE in teacher training and the MGI in Indian languages and performing arts; both institutions do that in cooperation with the UoM (UNESCO, 2006, p.14). To date, the MIE is

the main institution for the training of teachers for Mauritian schools. From the pre-primary to the secondary level MIE students have a range of options for their specialization such as Agricultural Education, Visual Arts, Curriculum Studies or Educational Administration and Management. The obtainable degrees include certificates, advanced and post-graduate certificates, diplomas and a Bachelor program at the UoM (Ibid., pp.22-23).

All PFIs are under the responsibility of the Tertiary Education Commission of Mauritius (TEC) which was established in 1990. The TEC has a number of different obligations: It is in charge of the registration and accreditation of public and private institutions and their programs; it carries out quality assurance and academic audits and develops the guidelines for these processes. More importantly the TEC receives funds by the Government and allocates them to the PFIs according to their financial plans. The TEC also monitors budgets for programs and projects at PFIs. It also has the mandate to raise additional funding for the support of tertiary education provision. Further activities of the TEC are to prepare reports and conduct sector related research, to produce and up-date information on the tertiary sector, to administer the overall planning on the tertiary level and to give out research scholarships (TEC, 2010).

Private providers offer a wide range of programs to learners in disciplines such as Dentistry, Information Technology, Business, Nursing, Law and others. The courses differ according to the level from sub-degree to postgraduate. Many private institutions operate as Mauritian based branches of overseas institutions and often follow a blended-learning approach that consists of face-to-face taught courses and distance learning. Examinations are either administered by the respective overseas institution or by the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (Ibid.).

Although there had been various initiatives from the beginning of the 20th century, the VET sector in Mauritius gradually emerged from the 1960s onwards with the establishment of a small 'Industries Branch' in 1963, first at the Ministry of Labour then at the Ministry of Education. Purpose of the Industries Branch was the development of training programs for the unemployed, underemployed and for seasonal workers. On this basis five 'Vocational Centres' were opened with courses e.g. in Bakery or Dressmaking. In 1968 an 'Industrial Trade Training Centre' (ITTC) was founded offering training e.g. in Masonry or Metal Fabrication. In the same year a 'School of Industrial Technology' was opened at the

University of Mauritius where diplomas in Mechanical or Civil Engineering and certificates for example in Textile Technology were awarded (Dubois, 2008, p.6). In 1970 and in 1971 respectively, a small 'Sea Training School' and a 'Hotel and Catering Training School' were set up. In 1976, TVET delivery was structured according to an 'Apprenticeship Mode', which meant that trainees spent four to five days in a company and one day per week at a training institution (Ibid., pp.7-8).

The 1980s saw a shortage of trained and skilled workers and consequently a project was launched to tackle the problem: The World Bank and the Government of India supported the Mauritian Government in the setting up of a second ITTC. A 'Two Year Plan' [1980-82] foresaw the upgrading of skills of employees and meeting training requirements of persons newly entering the workforce "[…] through institutional or in-plant training and vocational guidance." (Ibid., p.7).

On the basis of the Plan an institution to coordinate and promote the development of vocational training was founded, namely the 'Central Training Office' (CTO) in 1984. The CTO was substituted by the 'Industrial and Vocational Training Board' (IVTB) in 1989, which itself has been transformed into the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) in November 2009 (Dubois, 2008, p.7).

The IVTB's responsibilities were the regulation, facilitation and provision of training in collaboration with the public and private sector. In 1993 a 'National Trade Certification System' was introduced with the aim to "[…] to correct the [qualification] disorder prevailing at the time […]" (Ibid., p.8). The qualifications the Certification System [still] produces are called National Trade Certificates (NTCs) and are issued on different levels.

In order to obtain the NTC qualifications, trainers, learners and institutions had to apply for registration at the IVTB. Until the establishment of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority in 2002, the IVTB had registered 208 training institutions, 2049 trainers and now [as MITD] offers over 50 trades programs at basic, intermediary and Diploma level at eleven institutions (Ibid., pp.8-9).
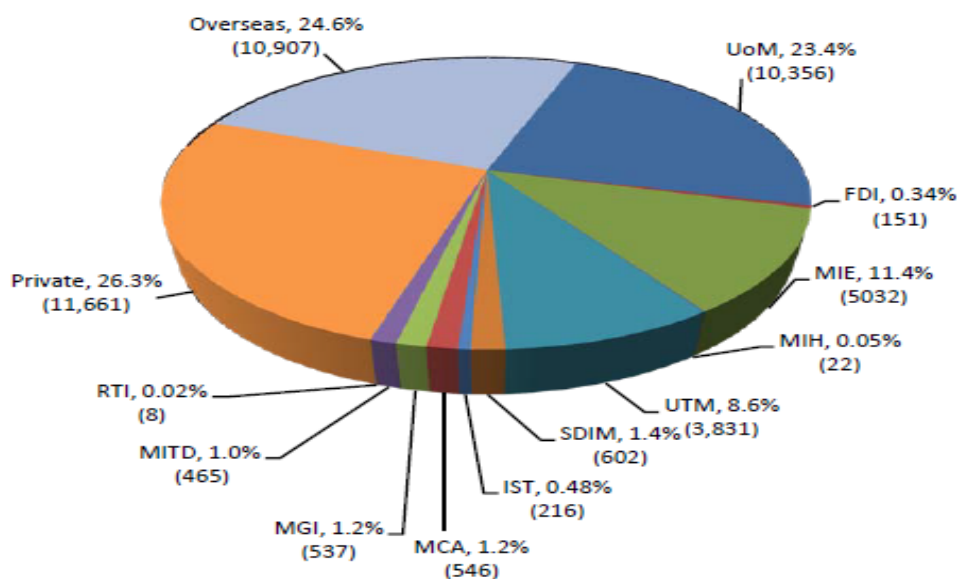
(TEC, 2011, p.4)

Illustration 12: Enrolment in the Mauritian tertiary sector (2010)

The illustration above shows the 2010 enrolment percentages and student numbers for the different PFIs, the total enrolment with private providers and the number of students in overseas tertiary education.

5.3.3 Education issues

The educational system in Mauritius has been subject to several reviews and reforms since independence. Nonetheless some challenges newly occur or prevail: For instance there is a perceived need for educational leadership and management training for those who are appointed heads of secondary schools. To date prospective head teachers do not undergo this kind of training prior to their selection or once they are in office (MoE, 2004, p.19).

Apart from that, it has been pointed out by the Government, that the tertiary sector lacks links with the economy and third party funding, especially at PFIs and that the post-graduate level should be expanded and research programs supported (Ibid., p. 26).

Although CPE ranking was given up in 2001, the number of failures after the primary cycle is still at around 30 per cent in each cohort. It has been assumed, that one of the reasons for the failure or low achievement of primary students is related to language policy. English as the main language of instruction is a foreign language to most students and supposedly hinders achievement at this early stage of schooling (Ibid., p.19). This is reflected by the Mauritian

'Literacy and Numeracy Strategy' which was launched in 2003. The Strategy was developed as a response to some 20 to 30 per cent of primary school cohorts leaving school with major difficulties in reading and writing in English and/or French. Since then, all primary schools are included in activities related to the Strategy: Teachers are trained to be more responsive to the different abilities of learners, group work and activity-based learning are emphasized and hours for Mathematics and Languages have been extended (Ibid., p.15).

Zones d'Education Prioritaires

Since independence, Mauritian educational policy has evolved around the principles of equality of opportunity, quality improvement of education, the strengthening of educational management and curriculum improvement (SACMEQ, 2005, p.13). Underpinned by these principles and taking into account the above mentioned difficulties within the primary sector, the Government launched a project in July 2003.

The project foresaw the declaration of several 'Zones d'Education Prioritaires' (ZEPs)[27] within the primary schooling environment. At the heart of the ZEPs are various partnerships which involve head teachers, teachers, parents, the community and the private sector, the MoE and the children themselves. Partnerships are supposed to increase all parties' feeling of commitment (Kumar and Gurrib, 2009, p.232).

Currently, the ZEP project covers 30 primary schools in the Republic with some 12.000 students. The ZEP schools all showed CPE pass rates of below 40 per cent compared to the national average pass rate of 67 per cent. ZEP activities vary according to the individual environment and context of the schools. What all schools have in common is the notoriously low achievement of children from poorer and poor families (Ibid., p.227). The project therefore aims at tackling the disadvantageous outset for education these children face and is understood as "[a]n integrated approach that targets the child in the home and learning environment [...]" (Kumar and Gurrib, 2009, p.234).

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[27] The ZEP concept is not new, it has been used by several European countries from the late 1960s. For mor information refer to Karsten, S., 2006. Policies for disadvantaged children under scrutiny: the Dutch policy compared with policies in France, England, Flanders and the USA. *Comparative Education* 42 (2), pp.261-282.

5.4 Road to the Mauritian national qualifications framework

VET sector reforms

The development of a national qualifications framework for Mauritius was mainly driven by reforms within the vocational education and training sector as in 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." (Mooten, 2008, p.3).

At the time the VET sector was characterized by a rather chaotic and confusing mass of qualifications and programs. This was due to the incoherence in VET provision caused by an ever increasing number of private providers in addition to the institutions run by the Government. Also VET appeared to be a dead end in the educational system as it lacked links with academic qualifications and is above all seen as an educational route for those failing in mainstream education and thus stigmatized. "It [VET] is still perceived by a large majority of the population as being restricted to CPE failures." (Dubois, 2008, p.9). Channeling mainly CPE "failures" into pre-vocational and vocational classes brings about another problem: Low levels of literacy and numeracy naturally put constraints on a possible success of vocational education provision.

International involvement

In 1998, due to the initiative of the IVTB, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) was contacted and given the task to conduct a feasibility study concerning a NQF for Mauritius. In fall of the same year a Mauritian delegation of the IVTB and the Ministry of Education set out to Scotland for a meeting with the SQA and to visit some Scottish training institutions. Following a subsequent stay in Mauritius, the Scottish Qualifications Authority handed in its report on a Mauritian NQF in December 1998. After considering report, the IVTB passed it on to the Ministry of Education and to the then Ministry of Environment, Human Resource Development and Employment (MoHRDE) in January 1999. (Ministry of Training, Skills Development and Productivity28 (MoTSDP), 2001).

Due to a reconstruction of the Ministries and a change in government in fall 2000, it took almost two years until the Government followed up the NQF approach again. In December 2000 a 'Project Steering Committee' (PSC) under the aegis of the IVTB was established with the mandate to "[…] work out on the NQF and drive it in line with international standards."

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[28]Now the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment.

(Mooten, 2008, p.3). It has been suggested in literature, that one of the reasons for the Government's newly active stance in regard to NQF development in 2000 was a result of pressure from the SADC (Marock, 2011, p.413.). The motivation behind the SADC's involvement at the time might be due to development of the SADCQF depending on NQF development of the member states.

In May 2001, the PSC set out to Australia [National Qualifications Framework Council (ANQFC)] and to New Zealand [Qualifications Authority (NZQA)] on behalf of NQF policy development (MoTSDP, 2001).

The MQA Act

The PSC which was operating since December 2000 prepared an interim report on the NQF. On the basis on this report the 'Mauritius Qualifications Authority Bill' was submitted to the Mauritian National Assembly and the respective Act passed in December 2001. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) was hence established as of February 2002 (Mooten, 2008, p.3).

5.5 Analyzing NQF policy

This chapter is organized according to the questions generated from the Dolowitz and Marsh policy transfer framework.

Who were the policy transfer agents?

Concluding from the information in Chapter 5.3, the agents involved in transferring and developing Mauritian NQF policy can be classified as follows:
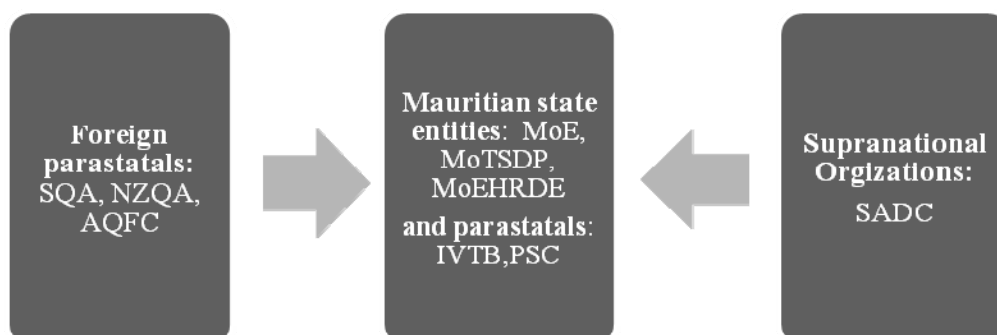

Illustration 13: Classification of policy transfer agents- NQF Mauritius

How did the policy transfer take place?

The timeframe in which Mauritian NQF policy was developed can be set from late 1998, when the SQA was hired to conduct a feasibility study until February 2002, when the MQA took up its work. During this time the study visits to Scotland, Australia and New Zealand certainly enabled policy transfer concerning NQF matters. The study visits in direct connection to NQF policy making represent the more obvious channels for policy transfer. However, there are more indicators for possible policy transfer in NQF related areas such as VET, Mauritius being member of the 'International Vocational Education and Training Association' (IVETA) and the 'International Federation of Training and Development Organizations (IFTDO)'. These supranational organizations represent an environment through which policy transfer is facilitated [Refer to Chapter 2].

In regard to RPL, the MQA collaborates with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the 'Académie de la Réunion' (MQA, 2010a, p.40). Through this collaboration a policy network has been formed, dedicated to the common cause of and sole focus on RPL.

As a member of the SADC and the Commonwealth of Learning, Mauritius is involved in the development of the SADCQF and the VUSSC framework. It is likely that in this context, policy transfer also occurred, especially since the SADC supposedly pressured Mauritius into progressing with its NQF development.

From 2007 onwards, the MQA signed several 'Memoranda of Technical Cooperation and Partnership' with other African states such as Namibia, Botswana, Seychelles, Ghana and Tanzania (Ibid., p.39). Obviously, these Memoranda are instruments to promote policy transfer as their purposes is the

[…] alignment of the National Qualifications Framework and related activities and the setting and defining of standards for qualifications as well as the sharing and exchange with regard to key policies. (Ibid.).

As well as "[…] adopting international best practices in the training system." and to "[…] develop a common mechanism for evaluation of qualifications." (MQA, 2010a, p.39).

What was transferred?

To answer this question it is necessary to look at why Mauritian NQF stakeholders decided to draw lessons from especially three other frameworks. In Mauritius the original idea was to have a framework for vocational qualifications, the idea being a result of the perceived need for reform in the VET sector. Accordingly, the Scottish Qualifications Authority seemed to be a reliable source of information and expertise, because at the time the institution was hired for a feasibility study, the Scottish framework mainly catered for Scottish National Vocational Qualifications (SNVQs); a comprehensive framework was introduced later in 2001 (Allais, 2010, p.31).

Study visits have been undertaken to New Zealand and Australia in 2001 because (i) "[…] these two countries have a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework […]."; (ii) "[…] the qualifications framework in these countries has been in operation for some time already."; (iii) "[…] because Mauritius also wants to develop a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework and the findings from the visit will help the Steering Committee to take cognizance of such arrangements […]."(MoTSDP, 2001). According to these statements, the subjects of policy transfer have been the creation and implementation of a comprehensive framework on the basis of experience by the NQF stakeholders in New Zealand and Australia. Why was the NQF introduced?

As has been mentioned, the NQF policy in Mauritius mainly evolved from the demand for reform of the country's VET system. Mooten (2008) summarizes some of the most serious problems in the sector: The number of providing institutions grew from the 1990s onwards, producing a variety of certificates and qualifications. Some providers issued certificates and qualifications "[…] without clear and well defined outcomes of learning and training achieved." and learners "[…] were following expensive courses for qualifications which had no value." (p.3).

Many private institutions in Mauritius are run as branches from overseas organizations e.g. French, Australian, British, and learners sit for examinations of "more than twenty examining bodies" (p.3). In addition to that, many Mauritian students [more than 10.000 in 2010] enroll in tertiary education overseas and hence bring back a multitude of qualifications (Mooten, 2008, p.3).

The value of the certificates and qualifications has been unclear above all to employers as there was no common modus for establishing equivalences and no system for recognition of national and international awards. Moreover the pathways between different levels of qualifications and between different institutions were unclear to learners. The portability of qualifications was thus limited and no possibility was given for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, all in all constraining lifelong learning (Ibid.).

Further, Dubois (2000) stated some general problems of the Mauritian qualifications system which contributed to the development of a comprehensive framework instead of a VET framework:

"More emphasis is laid on the processes leading to achievement (teaching and learning) than on the qualifications (recognition of achievement)."

"The education system is too academic, and prepares students for higher and higher levels of education."

"The education system is very inefficient at all levels. Only 4% of a primary school intake of about 31,000 ends up with a degree."

What is the legal basis of the framework?

On the basis of the 'Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act' of December 2001 the MQA was established as a corporate body under the control of and administered by a Board. The Board is constituted by representatives of the Ministries responsible for education and training, of the TEC, the MITD [former IVTB], of a registered private training institution, one independent person and a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson who are appointed by the Minister of Education. Members of the Board stay in office for two years and can be re-appointed (RoM, 2001, p.916). The Board is in charge of the appointment of a Director who is the Chief Executive Officer of the MQA. Further, the Board can, if need be, establish 'committees' to which it could delegate tasks and powers and it could appoint 'officers' operating under the administrative control of the Director (RoM, 2001, pp.917-918).

The MQA is the main executive body concerning the framework and is responsible for the development of regulations for all relevant areas related to the NQF, for instance RPL, the registration of providers, trainers and programs and so forth. The regulations serve as subsidiary policies for the implementation of the qualifications framework (Ibid., pp.914-915, pp.920-921). As far as funding is concerned, the MQA Act demands of the MQA to set up of

a 'General Fund' into which all payments received by the Authority, comprising governmental funding, donations, interests, investments, and fees taken for services should be paid and from which all expenses of the MQA should be covered (Ibid., p.920).

What is the purpose of the NQF, what are the policy objectives, principles?
The national qualifications framework for Mauritius was developed with two objectives:
(i) to rationalize qualifications in Mauritius;
(ii) to be responsible for changing educational and training imperative (MQA, 2010, p.7).

These two objectives lead to several functions attributed to the NQF. Firstly, it is supposed to be a source of information for learners, helping them navigate through the qualifications available and giving them the possibility to map their qualifications on the NQF levels. According to the MQA mapping of qualifications presupposes "[…] to equate the level of skills acquired […] on the Framework. " (MQA, 2010, p.9). As a result employers and learners should be able to measure the skills and knowledge achieved (Ibid.).

The qualifications framework for Mauritius is also seen as a measure for standardization of qualifications and as an instrument for quality assurance, above all in the VET sector. Quality assurance is supposedly achieved by assessing VET qualifications against sets of criteria at the different levels of the NQF (Ibid.). The same procedure is done with applications from trainers meaning, their qualifications and experience are assessed and compared to the NQF levels. Depending on the level the trainers are registered at, they are allowed to deliver education and training up to one level lower than their own (Ibid, p.10).

The NQF serves as a framework for the recognition of foreign qualifications through the establishment of equivalence with Mauritian qualifications. This means that holders of foreign qualifications receive information about their level of learning and about how to progress further on their educational path (Ibid.). Being "a pre-defined path route" for lifelong learning, the Mauritian framework is supposed to facilitate access, progression and hence [social] mobility of learners, for instance by providing a system for the recognition of prior learning in informal or non-formal settings (Ibid., p.9, p.10).

Generally, the NQF is seen as a policy instrument to make qualifications transferable and portable (MQA, 2011); integrate education and training resulting in "parity of esteem" for

VET (Ibid.); contribute to economic development by creating "a trained population" (Ibid., MQA, 2010, p.9); improve the quality of the educational system and increase the accountability of the system (MQA, 2011).

What are the architectural features of the NQF?

The Mauritian qualifications framework is a comprehensive ten level framework comprising all educational levels, starting with the CPE at the primary level and ending with the Doctorate level in higher education (MQA, 2010, p.8).

LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY EDUCATION	TVET / WORKPLACE	TERTIARY EDUCATION	LEVEL
10			Doctorate	10
9			Masters Degrees eg MA, MSc, M Phil Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma	9
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

(MQA, 2010, p.8)

Illustration 14: The Mauritian NQF

As can be seen in the diagram above, the different educational streams are divided up into three segments or columns, the first one including primary and secondary education, the second VET and education at the work place and the third segment represents the tertiary sector.

To all levels of the framework level descriptors have been assigned. The level descriptors provide information about what a learner is enabled to do and which processes a learner is enabled to carry out (MQA, 2011).

For example at level 2, a learner is enabled to "Demonstrate a narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills" and is enabled to carry out processes that are "1. limited in range; 2.

repetitive and familiar; 3. applied within closely defined contexts: 4. Require close supervision." (Ibid.). All qualifications registered on the framework are defined by a number of credits to determine their volume and level of complexity, for instance the 'National Certificate in Computing' at level 2 comprises a credit total of 60 and at level 3 a credit total of 111 (Ibid.).

What is the understanding of a qualification in the context of the Mauritian national qualifications framework? The MQA (2011) defines qualifications generally as "[…] an award which recognises that learning has taken place and a standard achieved." Qualifications that are based on the frameworks regulations are modularized, meaning that a full qualification is achieved by a predetermined accumulation of credits and combination of learning outcomes (Ibid.).

All qualifications consist of unit standards in which the learning outcomes are embedded. The unit standards represent the "[…] smallest building blocks of the NQF […]" determining the type and quality of the evidence needed to show that learning did occur (Ibid.)

How is the NQF implemented?
The overall responsibility for the NQF and its implementation naturally lies with the MQA. As has been outlined above the Qualifications Authority has the legal obligation to develop policies and mechanisms for (i) quality assurance and standardization of programs of training institutions, (ii) the accreditation of award programs and non-award courses29, (iii) the registration of training institutions, programs and trainers, (iv) the recognition of and equivalence of VET qualifications and (v) the recognition of prior informal or non-formal learning. The MQA delegates the development of qualifications at the national level which "[…] can be run by any local training institution." (MQA, 2010, p.18).

It can be argued that the activities of the MQA are mainly focused on the VET sector. This observation is underpinned by the fact that although the framework is comprehensive thus valid for the primary, secondary education and the tertiary sector, the governance for these educational segments still lies with the Ministry of Education, the Mauritian Examination Syndicate (MES) and the TEC, respectively (Marock, 2011, pp.413-414). The MQA's involvement in the VET sector is hardly surprising since this sector had caused the most

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[29] Non-award courses are usually short courses or awareness courses, leading to a certificate of attendance without any formal assessment (MQA, 2010, p.12).

concerns prior to NQF development and legislation. Moreover, after it started operating in February 2002, the MQA took over the regulatory tasks for VET that had been performed until then by the IVTB (Dubois, 2008, p.9).

Despite its broad responsibilities the MQA is not an awarding body. All domestic [VET] qualifications are awarded either by the MITD, the MES or the MIH (MQA, 2010, p.22).

Stakeholder involvement

The involvement of stakeholders in the context of the Mauritian NQF is organized on different levels. Firstly, the Board of the MQA is constituted by different representatives of the Government, namely the Ministry of Education, and parastatals like the TEC and the MITD, but also of the Mauritius Employers' Federation and the private training institutions. Secondly, all unit standards for the framework are developed by so called 'Industry Training Advisory Committees' (ITACs). The ITACs consist of public and private sector representatives and collaborate with the MQA in the generation of qualifications, which are mostly 'National Certificates' in several different trades. The reason for setting up ITACs is to "[…] help the Mauritian labour to acquire qualifications that are relevant to [the] labour market […]" (MQA, 2010, p.17). In 2010 twenty ITACs representing the Mauritian economy, e.g. in Jewelry, Furniture Making, Mechanical Engineering or Hospitality and Tourism Management had been functional.

At the periphery of NQF development, another institution was set up in the course of reforming the VET sector. In 2003 the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) was established to carry out a number of tasks such as:

"Establish linkages between the education and training systems and the work place;"

"Provide a forum for constant dialogue and consensus building among stake holders on all matters related to human resource development;"

"Take appropriate measures to reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of human resource;"

"Monitor the participation of employers, employees and job seekers in training schemes and programs;"

"Develop schemes for retraining and multi skilling;" (HRDC, n.d.).

The HRDC consists of representatives of the Government and of the Directors of the MQA, the TEC and the 'National Productivity and Competitiveness Council'. More importantly it also involves private sector institutions, the trade unions and independent persons such as a lecturer of the UTM. In regard to the NQF, the main objective of the Council was to develop a 'National Human Resource Development Plan' in order to figure out priority sectors and manpower demand for human resource development as the basis for new human resource policies in Mauritius (Ibid.). The Plan was published in April 2007 after conducting a 'Manpower Planning Survey' in Mauritius and Rodrigues with some 15.000 public and private sector employers from mid 2005 to mid 2006 (HRDC, n.d., RoM, 2005).

What progress has been made concerning the NQF's implementation to date?
The Mauritian Qualifications Authority has launched an 'Awareness Campaign' in the form of workshops. The workshops are organized on the local and regional level with the purpose of informing the public and various stakeholders about the NQF (MQA, 2010, p.22).

The most significant step towards the NQF's implementation was the formulation of 'Quality Assurance Standards' which are in place since 2007 and lay out the MQA's procedure[30] for the accreditation of award programs, the approval of non-ward courses and the registration of training institutions (Ibid., pp.11-13). The Standards are subject to adjustments according to any changes in educational or other relevant legislation (Ibid., p.14). Although the Standards have been implemented in 2007, activities concerning accreditation, registration and other MQA responsibilities have started earlier, precisely in 2004 as can be deduced from the MQA's statistics. For instance, the accreditation of award programs which are an expression of formal learning and located on specific NQF levels mirrors an increasing demand for such qualifications. From only 15 in 2004 the number of award programs has risen to 1347 as of April 2010 (Ibid., p.11).

The approval of non-award courses takes up to five working days after evidence of attendance has been submitted to the MQA. The number of approved courses was at 3881 in April 2010 (Ibid., p.12). No numbers are found in regard to the recognition of foreign qualifications.

In order to be registered as a training institution by the MQA, a provider must meet certain criteria concerning safety, security, finances, equipment, other resources and infrastructure

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[30] For information of the procedures refer to http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/mqa/file/qastandard.pdf or to MQA, 2010.

(Ibid., p.13). In April 2010 the number of training institutions registered was 504 and thus almost doubled from 254 in 2004 (Ibid.). Along with the registration of training institutions goes the registration of trainers on the NQF. The registration of trainers is based on their field of competence and in April 2010 5520 registered trainers worked at Mauritian training institutions (Ibid. p.14). One of the main tasks of the MQA is to establish "parity of esteem" of VET and work place qualifications compared to academic qualifications. The approach in that matter is to recognize VET qualifications through evaluation and validation, or to establish equivalence of qualifications resulting in two formal qualifications. Recognition and equivalence allow the holder of the qualification "[…] to be considered for admission to further higher education and/or employment activities." (Ibid., p.15). Until April 2010 there have been 178 cases of recognition and 275 cases of equivalence of VET qualifications (Ibid.).

It has been mentioned that the MQA handed the task of generating qualifications to ITACs and that until April 2010 twenty ITACs had taken up their work. These ITACs had developed 100 qualifications in different sectors and 2547 unit standards as of January 2010 (Ibid., p.17). Much progress is to be acknowledged in the field of RPL. In Mauritian terms RPL is
"the acknowledgment through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credit in a unit standard or a module".(MQA, 2010, p.23)

The Qualifications Authority developed its RPL policy in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning and the Institute for Lifelong Learning of UNESCO in 2007. The result was a Mauritian RPL model which was launched in the same year in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Ibid., p.24. p.25). To date RPL is implemented in the Hospitality, Plumbing, Construction and Printing sectors and four more are to follow. In the context of RPL, the MQA has also developed a 'National Certificate in Adult Literacy' at level 1 of the NQF (Ibid., p.27). An illustration of the Mauritian RPL model can be found in the Annex.

What is the impact of the NQF?
The Mauritian framework is seen as "[…] 'one of the most established qualifications frameworks in Africa and indeed in the world' […]" (MQA, 2010, p.8). This however does not tell anything about the impact since progress in implementation does not automatically

foreshadow the framework's impact. Similarly to the case study on Seychelles, it does suggest some implications, at least for the VET system in Mauritius.

Over 500 training institutions have been registered on the framework. These institutions account mostly for the private sector as the main government run VET institution in Mauritius is the MITD. As registered institutions and trainers operate according to the MQA's Quality Assurance Standards, registration could indeed lead to an increase of quality and standardization in VET provision. Further, as programs and non-award courses, if accredited, are pitched on the framework, this could increase the transparency of qualifications in terms of their 'value' and consequently enable learners to follow certain qualification routes based on the framework's levels.

The possibility of recognition and equivalence for VET qualifications might do away with the image of VET as a dead-end educational path, since progressing into higher education is [now] possible. The latter of course presupposes adequate study opportunities for holders of these qualifications and that might ultimately lead to change in the tertiary sector.

Finally, the elaborate model for RPL in Mauritius could cater e.g. for some of the former "CPE failures" whose number is not to underestimate. On the other hand this turns the attention to another issue: RPL in Mauritius is "arguably the most pressing issue around vocational education and training." (MQA, 2010, p.22). It is supposed to serve "[…] as a means to validate and recognize the competences of workers/people who did not have the opportunity to follow the formal education."(Ibid., p.23). This suggests that many people are in need of RPL, especially in certain sectors.

6. Conclusion

National qualifications frameworks are commonly associated with policies being disseminated cross nationally. The prevailing discourse in NQF literature is about policy borrowing and this discourse has been contested in this thesis: It has been argued that the concept of borrowing should be considered as one of the 'degrees' of policy transfer, because on its own, borrowing even as conceptualized by Phillips and Ochs (2003) cannot serve as a sound methodological basis for the analysis of NQF policy. Simply because it does not consider all aspects of cross national policy making, for instance who is involved in a policy process and what exactly has been the subject to policy 'borrowing'. Therefore the Dolowitz and Marsh policy transfer framework has been chosen to derive key conceptual questions for the two case studies. The aim of the case studies was to outline NQF policy in two different countries with similar socio-economic characteristics. Also, this thesis represents an attempt to provide some general insight to current developments in regard to national qualifications frameworks in sub-Sahara Africa.

Different approaches in different countries

Considering the question on what is generally transferred in terms of NQF policy, it is not the policy itself to be precise, it is the policy instrument. Not surprisingly, the instrument is the NQF approach itself. However, it is not contested, that there is a general consent about what a NQF is supposed to achieve, policy goals are very similar but with different emphasizes, as has been outlined in Chapter 3.3.

But if the case studies and the briefly outlined examples of NQFs in other African countries show anything, then that policies concerning NQF development are not simply borrowed or copied. In each case policy makers try/tried to implement a framework which caters for the country's domestic challenges and needs. Certainly, the notion of 'universal remedy' sticks to NQFs in connection to developing countries and it remains subject to future research, if high pinned hopes can be fulfilled. Nonetheless, the fact that contexts and reasons for NQF development and the frameworks' scopes indeed differ, tell us that individual solutions are preferred over 'one-NQF-model-fits-all' attitudes. This is also underpinned by the case studies. Seychelles and Mauritius decided to implement comprehensive frameworks. Both countries used to struggle with the recognition of the foreign post-secondary and tertiary education qualifications which many students obtain each year and both countries

implemented a framework in order to establish equivalence ['parity of esteem'] between occupational qualifications and academic qualifications.

In Seychelles, the emphasis is placed on the NQF being a 'map' for learners and much is done in the public relations department. Information about progress in NQF implementation and about what the NQF is supposed to do is available through a variety of media and public events. It appears that support from those whom the NQF caters for is vital to the Seychellois NQF strategy. This is also mirrored by the fact that in Seychelles stakeholder involvement is extensive despite comprehensive responsibilities by the SQA. Stakeholders- industry, training institutions, professional bodies and so forth- are supposed to be involved at all levels of framework implementation. The downside of this is, as has been mentioned, that NQF implementation was partly delayed due to stakeholders being overwhelmed by their new duties. Further, providers showed a lack of effort regarding quality assurance measures.

The Seychellois framework is comprehensive but mainly focuses on education and qualifications from the post-secondary level. There are two major reasons for this focus which are rooted in the country's educational system. Firstly, the transfer from general secondary education and post-secondary education is competitive and leads to some 30 per cent of students of each cohort being left out of either training or academic education at the tertiary level. Therefore a national qualifications framework as a possible instrument to implement RPL could help integrate informal or non-formal qualifications, which these 30 per cent might acquire. Secondly, the framework is seen as a means to make sense of the multitude of foreign qualifications circulating in the Seychellois labor market. This could also be particularly important for teachers' qualifications as some 11 per cent of teaching staff in Seychelles are from other countries. However, the output of the SQA's recognition of foreign qualifications has been rather low in contrast to the numbers of holders from foreign qualifications- until April 2011 not even 150 qualifications had been recognized. The number of foreign qualifications in Seychelles might decrease in the following years since students can now attend University in the country, but entry to the UniSey will remain limited considering the programs offered and capacities available, meaning that still numerous Seychellois students will pursue their education overseas, partly motivated by the NHRDC's elaborate international collaboration and scholarship system.

Despite some commonalities regarding the purpose of the NQF, which have been mentioned above, the motive for the Mauritian qualifications framework have been more explicit than those for the Seychellois counterpart. The Mauritian education and training system is the focal point of the framework policy due to its fragmentation resulting from extensive provision by private providers and low standardization in the sector. VET is also stigmatized because weaker students are streamed into VET provision already after primary education. Consequently, a comprehensive framework was developed instead of a partial framework for vocational qualifications- the main aim is to establish equivalence of vocational/occupational qualifications and academic qualifications through equating the levels of skills acquired through the NQF. A general question in this context which is asked over and over again in many countries is, if occupational and academic qualifications can really be equivalent and if they have to be in the first place.

The numbers of programs being accredited and institutions being registered in the NQF is noteworthy, but this does not account for a real increase in VET take-up. Furthermore, the take-up of the newly developed qualifications is unclear.

Compared to the Seychellois involvement strategy, stakeholders are attributed different tasks in Mauritius. The Mauritian strategy is rather that of representation than involvement, as stakeholders are members of a number of management bodies in connection to the framework, the MQA Board and the HRDC. Mauritian industry and trade representatives as well as employers perform an executive function only in the ITACs.

RPL is one of the cores of the Mauritian NQF policy as it could cater for those who "did not have the opportunity to follow formal education". The importance which is attributed to RPL is indirectly pointing to another problem, as it seems that there are many people in need of RPL. Why do so many workers/people not have the opportunity to pursue formal education? Is this due to poverty and resulting unequal educational opportunities, a problem being tackled in the ZEPs? Or are there general flaws in the educational system in Mauritius, mind that around 20 per cent of children leaves primary school without being fully literate in English and/or French. Although the Seychelles general schooling curriculum tend to have a language overload, as Purvis (2004) states, maybe the Seychellois approach to teach school beginners in Creole could held weaker students in Mauritius.

On the other hand, the MQA has become a real policy entrepreneur on the subject of RPL and is promoting its RPL model internationally (MQA, 2008, 2010a).

Despite some similarities in the matter of the NQF's purpose and its scope, the two case studies exemplify how NQF policy differs, as has been hinted at above. Differences result from a number of aspects. This brings us back to the key conceptual questions which have been used to structure the NQF policies of Seychelles and Mauritius. The policy instruments, in this context some kind of national qualifications framework and a Qualifications Authority, might be the same but by considering the 'why, who, what, from where and how' it becomes obvious that the policy outcome is not.

As far as the degree of policy transfer is concerned, at least the NQFs discussed in this thesis are emulations: The tools and structures of a policy approach from elsewhere are then shaped to comply with the local conditions (Stone, 2000, p.6).

An attempt to place NQF policy in Seychelles and Mauritius on the policy continuum would lead to somewhere between voluntary transfer and obligated transfer. Both countries, as many others across the globe perceive[d] the necessity to develop a framework due to domestic challenges and issues to which the NQF seems to provide a remedy- if this is true remains to be seen. However, the influence of externalities, such as pressure from the SADC in the case of Mauritius or the fact that NQFs are a global 'trend' and that framework are especially tempting to developing or emerging countries should be noted.

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Annex

Annex 1 The Dolowitz and Marsh policy transfer framework

A Policy Transfer Framework

Why Transfer? Continuum Want To............. Have To			Who Is Involved in Transfer?	What Is Transferred?		From Where			Degrees of Transfer	Constraints on Transfer	How To Demonstrate Policy Transfer	How Transfer leads to Policy Failure
Voluntary	Mixtures	Coercive			Past	Within-a Nation	Cross-National					
Lesson Drawing (Perfect Rationality)	Lesson Drawing (Bounded Rationality)	Direct Imposition	Elected Officials	Policies (Goals) (content) (instruments)	Internal	State Governments	International Organizations	Copying	Policy Complexity (Newspaper) (Magazine) (TV) (Radio)	Media		Uniformed Transfer
	International Pressures		Bureaucrats Civil Servants	Programs	Global	City Governments	Regional State Local Governments	Emulation	Past Policies	Reports		Incomplete Transfer
	(Image) (Consensus) (Perceptions)									(Commissioned) (uncommissioned)		
	Externalities	Pressure Groups	Institutions			Local Authorities		Mixtures	Structural Institutional	Conferences		Inappropriate Transfer
	Conditionality	Political Parties	Ideologies					Inspiration	Feasibility (Ideology) (cultural proximity) (technology) (economic) (bureaucratic)	Meetings/ Visits		
	(Loans) (Conditions Attached to Business Activity)								Language			
	Obligations	Policy Entrepreneurs/ Experts	Attitudes/ Cultural Values							Statements (written) (verbal)		
			Consultants Think Tanks Transnational Corporations Supranational Institutions	Negative Lessons			Past Relations					

(Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p.9)

Annex 2 Timeline of NQF development until 2009

Table 1: A timeline of qualifications frameworks

1983	The Scottish *Action Plan* (*16-18s in Scotland: An Action Plan*) introduced outcomes-based, portable, 'institutionally versatile', modules for vocational education.
1985	Establishment of Scotvec.
1986	Review of Vocational Qualifications established in the UK which recommended the competence-based NVQ framework. Review in New Zealand suggests 'achievement-based' awards for school system.
1987	*Australia Reconstructed* report: emphasis on the notion of skills and the role of education in making Australia more productive and competitive internationally, exposing providers to competition, establishing recognition system. National Council for Vocational Qualifications established in the UK.
1988	First NVQs awarded in the UK.
1989	Scotvec extended modularization to Higher National Certificates and Diplomas.
1990	New Zealand Qualifications Framework created, with aim of being fully operational by 1997, and phasing out all existing qualifications. First officially titled National Qualifications Framework.
1991	SCOTCAT (Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer scheme) launched for all higher education in Scotland. Publication of Gilbert Jessup's *Outcomes. NVQs and the Emerging Model of Education and Training*.
1993	Malaysian National Skills Qualifications Framework (occupational qualifications only).
1994	National Council for Standardization and Certification established in Mexico.
1995	Australian Qualifications Framework established. South African Qualifications Authority Act passed, aiming to phase out all existing qualifications by 2002. Competence framework initiated in Chile.
1999	*Higher Still* introduced in Scotland: 'unified system' of academic and vocational awards for the 16-18 age group. Ireland passes Qualifications Act. A White Paper in New Zealand signals major changes to the framework. Bologna Declaration signed, through which 29 (now over 40) European countries agreed to start aligning their higher education systems.
2000	Singapore National Skills Recognition System.
2001	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework officially introduced. Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act passed. Maldives National Qualifications Framework established. New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications created, incorporating the NZQF. Review of South African NQF commissioned. Brazil competence-based training system initiated.

2002	Qualifications framework established in France. Chile starts competence-based training activities through a national project named Chile Qualifies.
2002-2006	Frameworks under development in Fiji, Samoa, Singapore, Vanuatu, Hong Kong SAR, Maldives, Tonga.
2003	Frameworks established in the Philippines and Ireland. East European and ex-Soviet States join Bologna Process. Belgium initiated Flemish Qualifications Framework development. Germany initiated Qualifications Framework development. First journal of research articles on NQFs (special edition of the Journal of Education and Work).
2004	Latvia start Qualifications Framework development.
2005	Vanuatu qualifications framework adopted. Work started on Qualifications Framework in Finland, Malta, Norway, The Netherlands. Consultation started on European Qualifications Framework.
2006	Work on Papua New Guinea National TVET Qualifications Framework, Albania Qualifications Framework, Czech Republic, Montenegro, Romania, Poland started. First two frameworks (Scotland and Ireland) self-certified against the Bologna framework.
2007	Malaysian Qualifications Framework adopted. Expansion of Maldives Qualifications Framework to incorporate technical and vocational qualifications. Frameworks being developed in Andorra, Armenia, Belgium (French), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Iceland, India, Lithuania, Pakistan, Sweden, Switzerland. OECD report on qualifications systems published. Colombia initiates competence-based training.
2008	The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning agreed. Levels established in Viet Nam for vocational qualifications, effectively establishing a framework. Albania Qualifications Framework adopted. New Qualifications Framework developed in Denmark. Frameworks being designed in Austria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Italy, Lichtenstein, Turkey. Cyprus and Ukraine decided to develop an NQF. South African NQF substantially changed through new legislation.
2009	Following two years of tests and trials by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the new Qualifications and Credit Framework was approved for England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

(Allais, 2010, pp.20-21)

Annex 3 Level descriptors for the Seychellois NQF

Qualification type	Descriptors	Type of Occupation
PhD, Post-Doctorate	• Conduct cutting edge research in the field of study • Develop new techniques, ideas or approaches • Operate with complete autonomy	Doctor, Researcher
Master	• Has mastery of knowledge in the field of study • Propose solutions based on critical analysis of complex issues and research • Involved in management of resources and supervision of others.	Expert/Specialist
Post Graduate	• Has in-depth specialized knowledge in the field of study • Apply specialized skills and principles based on systematic analysis of data in the field of study • Operate within broad autonomy	Specialist
Degree	• Has in-depth knowledge in the field of study • Apply well-established principles, requiring a wide variety of data to solve problems in different contexts • Operate within broad autonomy	Manager/supervisor
Advanced Diploma	• Has specialized knowledge in the field of study • Apply varied and specialized procedures and techniques in the field of study requiring basic research • Operate within broad parameters and a certain autonomy	Technician specialized
Diploma	• Has broad knowledge in the field of study • Apply varied procedures and techniques, to solve concrete problems, in non-routine contexts • Operate under broad guidance	Technician
Advanced Certificate	• Has operational knowledge in the field of study • Apply a range of procedures and techniques in the field of study, to solve familiar problems in fairly routine contexts • Operate under general supervision	Trades person/ Specialized at intermediate level
Certificate	• Has basic operational knowledge in the field of study • Apply basic procedures and techniques in response to precise instructions • Operate under direct supervision	Apprentice/ skilled at basic level

(SQA, n.d., pp.6-7)

Annex 4 Level descriptors for the Mauritian NQF

Level Descriptors

LEVEL		ENABLES LEARNERS TO:	ENABLES LEARNERS TO CARRY OUT PROCESSES THAT:
1	The level at which CPE is registered	Demonstrate basic numeracy, literacy and basic IT skills	
2	The level at which National Certificates at level 2 are registered	Demonstrate narrow range of knowledge and cognitive skills	1. Are limited in range 2. Are repetitive and familiar 3. Are applied within closely defined contexts 4. Require close supervision
3	The level at which National Certificates at level 3 are registered	1. Demonstrate basic operational knowledge 2. Master readily available knowledge 3. Be able to use known solutions to familiar problems 4. Display/generate some new ideas	1. Are established and familiar 2. Are moderate in range 3. Are applied in a range of familiar contexts 4. Require supervision
4	The level at which National Certificates at level 4 are registered	1. Demonstrate a broad knowledge base incorporating some technical concepts 2. Have command of analytical interpretation of information 3. Express informed judgement 4. Be able to display a range of known responses to familiar problems	1. Require a wide range of technical skills 2. Are applied in a variety of familiar and non-familiar contexts with the need for some or no supervision 3. Demand occupation competence over a range of routine and non-routine tasks 4. Require the need for little or no supervision
5	The level at which National Certificates at level 5 are registered	1. Demonstrate broad knowledge base with substantial depth in area(s) of study 2. Have command of analytical interpretation of a range of data 3. Be able to determine appropriate methods and procedures to	1. Require a wide-range of technical and/or management skills 2. Involve a wide-choice of standard and non standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations 3. Are employed in highly variable routine and non-

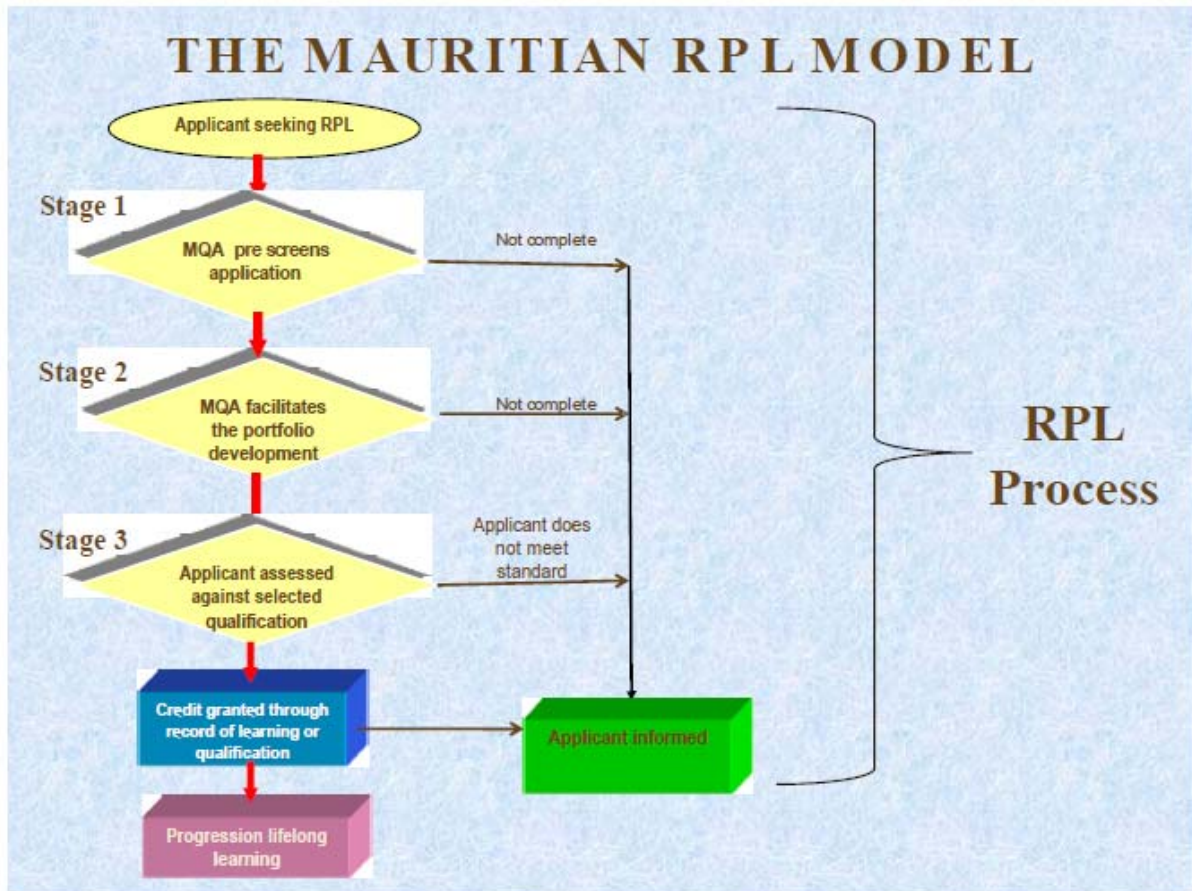|			
		respond to a range of problems 4. Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments 5. Display qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility	routine contexts
6	The level at which National Diplomas at level 6 are registered	1. Demonstrate specialised in-depth knowledge in their area(s) of study. 2. Have command of analysis, diagnosis, planning and evaluation across a broad range of technical and/or management functions. 3. Be able to formulate appropriate responses to resolve problems. 4. Communicate, in a variety of forms and with structured and coherent arguments, the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and identify the broader principles, issues and impacts. 5. Display qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and in contexts where they are contributing to decision-making processes.	1. Require a command of a wide range of highly specialised technical and/or management, and/or conceptual or creative skills. 2. Involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures. 3. Are applied in highly variable and non-routine contexts.
7	The level at which Bachelors Degree	1. Knowledge and critical understanding of the	1. Use a range of established techniques to

	(Ordinary Degree) is registered	well-established principles of their area(s) of study, including an understanding of some advanced aspect(s) of their area(s) of study. 2. Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context. 3. Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s), and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study. 4. An understanding of the limits of that knowledge and how this influences analysis and interpretation based on that knowledge.	initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solution to problems arising from that analysis. 2. Effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and deploy key techniques of the discipline with confidence. 3. Undertake further training; develop existing skills, and acquire new competencies that enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations. And would have: Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making in complex contexts.
8	The level at which Bachelors degree with honours, often referred to as honours degrees? are registered. Also at this level are ?conversion? programmes based largely on undergraduate material.	1. A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of a coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which are at or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline. 2. An ability to deploy accurately established analytical techniques and enquire within their discipline. 3. An ability to devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems using ideas or techniques some of which will be at the	1. Apply the methods, techniques and (where applicable) modes of practice that they have learned & reviewed to consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge & understanding so as to initiate and carry out projects. 2. Consider abstract data, concepts and/or raw materials and frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution or identify a range of solution to a problem. 3. Communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions in a variety of formats appropriate to both

		forefront of a discipline and to describe; and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent scholarship in the discipline. 4. An appreciation of the uncertain, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. 5. The ability to manage their own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g. refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).	specialists and non-specialist audiences. And would have: Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility for decision making in complex and unpredictable contexts, and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.
9	The level at which Masters degrees, e.g. MA, MSc, and M.Phil are registered. Also at this level are advanced programmes, such as Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas. However, differentiation between Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas is made on the basis of the lesser number of credits obtained and no practical understanding of techniques of research for the latter qualifications.	1. A systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice. 2. A comprehensive understanding of relevant techniques applicable to their research or advanced scholarship. 3. Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. 4. Conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline and to	1. Deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, make sound judgement in the absence of complex data, and communicate these conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences. 2. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level. 3. Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. 4. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision making in complex and unpredictable situations and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional

		evaluate critically methodologies and where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.	development.
10	The level at which Doctorates are registered	1. The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication. 2. A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice. 3. The ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems. 4. A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.	1. Make informed judgement on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences. 2. Continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches. And would have: The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environment.

(MQA, n.d.)

Annex 5 Recognition of prior learning in Mauritius

(MQA, 2010, p.23)