

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Learning outcomes remain important, they just need to be used

3 July 2019

Johannesburg – As part of a series of events to celebrate 21 years of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), stakeholders in education and training in South Africa and Europe met for a two-day (24 – 25 June 2019) international Policy Learning Forum (PLF) on the conceptualisation and use of Learning Outcomes in South Africa and Europe.

Funded by the European Union, the PLF provided an opportunity for South Africa and Europe to jointly reflect and consider the key lessons learned from the use of learning outcomes in both South Africa and Europe. It enabled stakeholders to reflect critically and openly on the learning outcomes approach, which is key to qualifications frameworks the world over.

Learning outcomes are what a learner should know, understand and do after a learning process. They are meant to be the common language used in education, training, development and work even though the contexts in which they take place are very different.

The PLF reflected on how learning outcomes were thought about, how they developed over time, how they have been used, how they are currently used and how best to implement them. This is important if education and training is to address South Africa's triple challenge of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The challenge for qualification developers is that they must develop qualifications that include green skills and sustainable development, and take into account the changing world of work. Given the rapid technological advances characteristic of the 21st century, qualifications now need to be developed for jobs that do not yet exist, and that creates interesting and new challenges.

SAQA'S MISSION

To ensure the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework which contributes to the full development of each learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large

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Qualifications of the future must include Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) as access points for guiding learner inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking as well as transversal competencies such as:

- Critical and innovative thinking
- Inter-personal skills (e.g. presentation and communication skills, organisational skills, teamwork, etc.)
- Intra-personal skills (e.g. self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.)
- Global citizenship (e.g. tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, etc.), and
- Media and information literacy such as the ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyse and evaluate media content.

Delegates attending the PLF realised that both South Africa and Europe face similar challenges in implementing learning outcomes, one of which is that learning outcomes are understood differently and in many instances people do not recognise they are using learning outcomes.

Delegates affirmed the importance of qualifications frameworks and the learning outcomes underlying them as key in transforming education and training as well as helping address inequality, poverty and unemployment by empowering learners to grow their skills.

More conversations on learning outcomes and their implementation need to be heard at the national, regional and international level in order to keep learning outcomes at the top of the education agenda.

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