

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sustainable models of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) needed to scale up implementation

26 June 2019

Johannesburg – Representatives of the 105 statutory and non-statutory professional bodies recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) met on 21 June 2019 to reflect on their RPL practices at an international seminar, which forms part of a series of events to mark the 21st anniversary of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The seminar was hosted by SAQA in partnership with Insurance Sector Education Authority (INSETA).

RPL provides an alternative access route into a programme of learning for those who do not meet the formal entry requirements. It can also be for the awarding of credits for, or towards a qualification. RPL has its roots in the labour movement and is closely linked to the development of the South African NQF.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr Borhene Chakroun, Director: Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), shared lessons learnt in the application of RPL in France in relation to professional qualifications and professional designations.

France has a long history of RPL implementation compared to South Africa. However, there are similarities in the conceptualisation of RPL in both countries. For example, qualifications can be awarded in full or in part through RPL.

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

Postnet Suite 248
Private Bag X06
Waterkloof 0145
SAQA House
1067 Arcadia Street
Hatfield 0083
Tel (+27 12) 431-5000
Fax (+27 12) 431-5200
Helpdesk: 086 010 3188
Website: www.saqa.org.za
Email: saqainfo@saqa.org.za

RPL, in France, is widely accepted and there is funding for it. As a practice that has been in existence for over 80 years in that country, 86% of employers have a positive perception about RPL and 91% consider it useful for their staff. Dr Chakroun was quick to point that 64% of employers consider RPL as a complex process.

RPL in South Africa is about transformation, redress of past injustices and access to further learning as well as work opportunities. SAQA-recognised statutory and non-statutory professional bodies have a role to play in this regard. “Professional bodies need to use sustainable models of RPL in order to scale up its implementation” said Ms Nadia Starr, CEO of the INSETA.

Representatives of professional bodies present at the seminar agreed that RPL has started for the sector. Professional bodies have RPL policies already in place and most of them have started with implementation. What is needed now is to take RPL implementation to scale.

All 105 SAQA-recognised professional bodies have RPL policies in place as part of SAQA’s recognition requirements. SAQA will continue to engage professional bodies and monitor RPL implementation in order for South Africa to fully develop an RPL system for professional qualifications and professional designations.

Issued by: SAQA

Enquiries: Joe Samuels, SAQA CEO

Contact details: 012 431 5001 or 082 833 1271 or jsamuels@saqa.co.za

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