



Q: Is There a Place for Micro-credentials in the SA NQF?

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Outline of Presentation

1 What is a credential

2 Walking the gravelly path to define micro-credentials (Global vs local)

3 Where and how do micro-credentials fit into the SA NQF?

4 Key considerations and concluding remarks

What is a Credential?

- A qualification, **achievement, quality** or **aspect of a person's background** especially when **used to indicate their suitability** for something (Oxford Languages)
- The **abilities and experience** that **make someone suitable** for a particular job or activity, or **proof** of someone's ability and experience (Cambridge Dictionary)



Towards a definition of a Micro-credential: Global vs Local

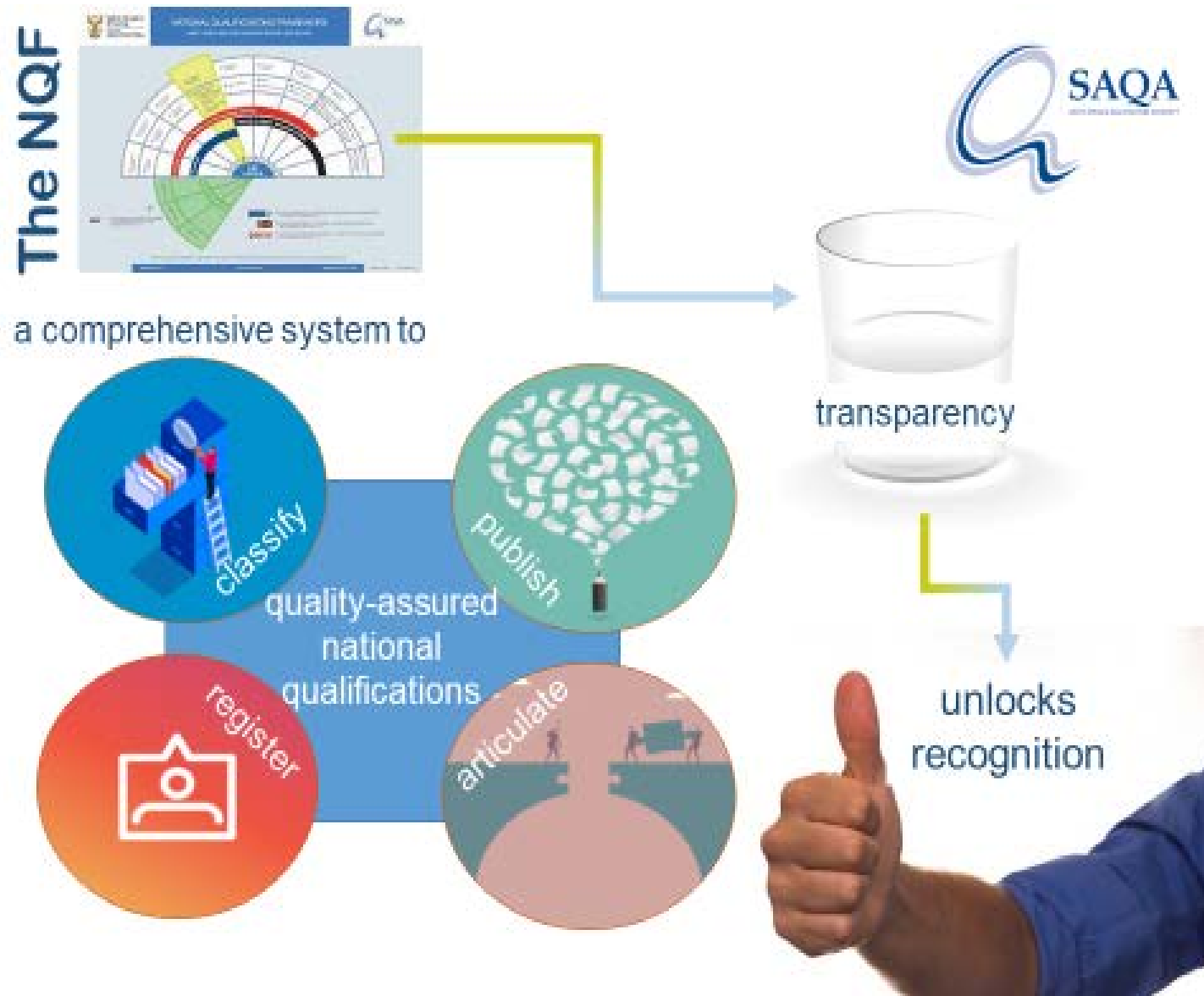


short, transparently-
assessed course
Flexible
upskill or reskill to meet
labour market needs

assessed achievement
less than a formal
qualification
owned, portable and
shareable
quality assured

?

What is our NQF ?



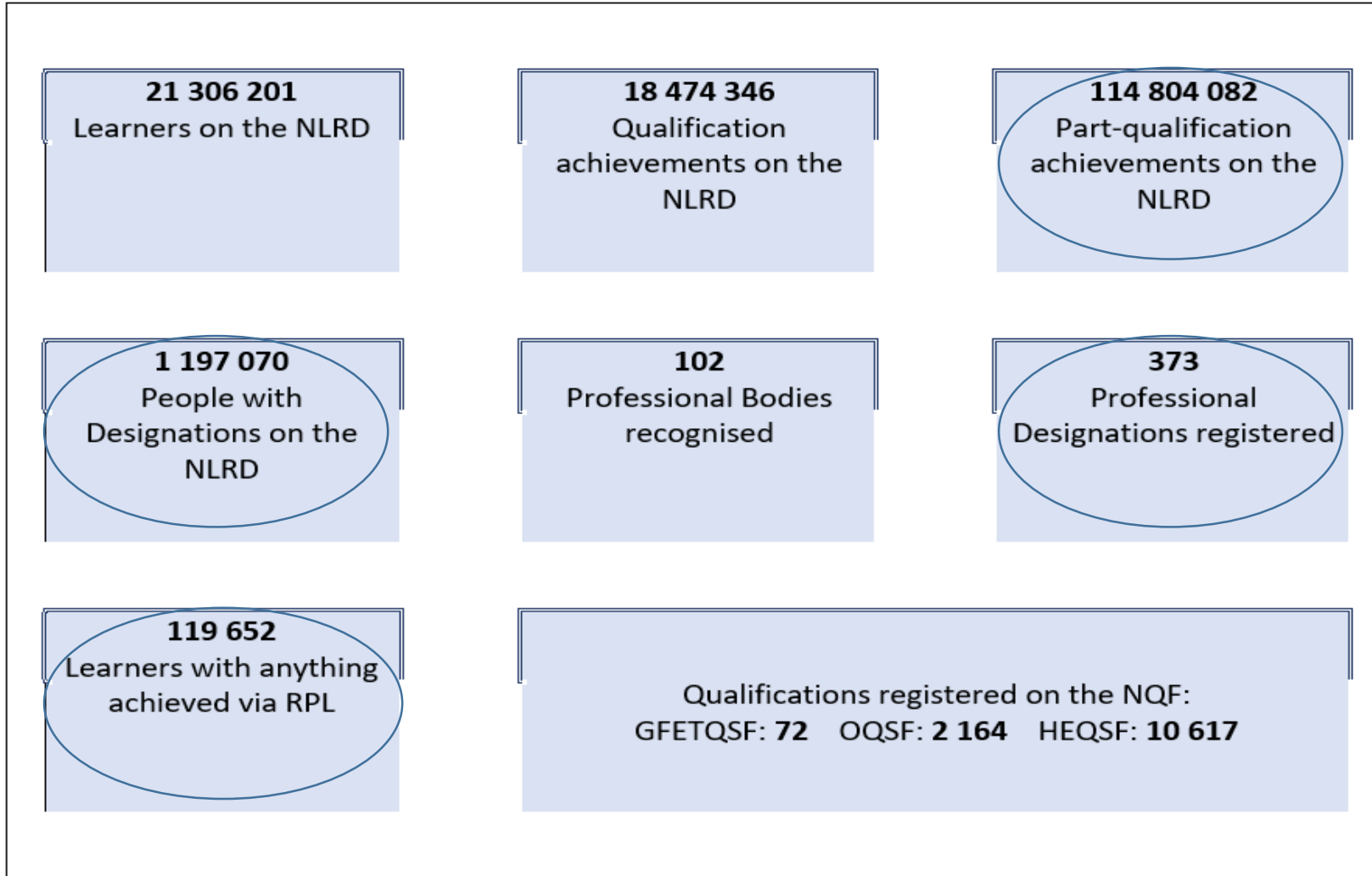
UNESCO: Pillars of Lifelong Learning



Information on the SA NQF MIS (NLRD)



Q: Do you consider the information that is circled in the 4 blocks micro-credentials?



If yes, then...
I would argue that we have already included “micro-credentials” using different terminology in our NQF.
The Q becomes - do we need to follow a global trend and “re-label/re-brand our old wine bottles”?

Is there a place for Micro-credentials in the SA NQF?



The SA NQF with its 3 sub-frameworks is a register of quality assured national qualifications and part-qualifications

Micro-credentials perceived as digital, adding to formal qualifications and statement of acknowledgement

- Q: Will we be “capturing” a generic term like “Credentials” which currently has wide scope and reach by qualifying and formalising it because it has become the "flavour of the time for the HE and VET global community"
- How will its potential to be commodified and commercialised affect the SA learner?
- Q: Have we mindfully considered the implications of adopting a “somewhat narrow current definition of micro-credentials” for making visible and recognising/validating non-accredited and non-certified non-formal and informal/self-learning “credentials”?



"The traditional boundaries are blurring between professional development, occupational credentialing and formal higher education. We are seeing the intensification of new forms of agreement around competence and status, including not only credentials but also micro-credentials, "nano"-degrees, and badges (digital badges, open badges)"

Sean Gallagher, "[From Micromasters to Nanodegrees](#)," *University World News*, no. 423 (August 12, 2016)

Q: Will the adoption of micro-credentials offer a more palatable menu to include recognition of credits and part-qualifications in our schooling and formal higher education spaces?

Additional Questions...?

- Can a term like “micro-credentials” which is being globally branded and marketed (and which is gaining much traction in the “Global North” (where a credential usually refers to formally accredited and certified qualifications) address our challenges of reconsidering and advancing our NQF as a relational construct for the recognition of ALL learning?

or

- Do we need to carefully consider and design a homegrown solution and lexicon that suits our particular context and needs?



Some Learner Considerations ...

- Where will my non-formal/informal credentials (that might lead to paid work) fit?
- Which learning/credits/qualifications – short or long (assessed/certified or non-assessed/non-certified) – will be recognised to get me there?
- How much will this shift to “the formalization of my learning” cost me and how will it be funded?
- What is the value-add and who will benefit if we align micro-credentials to the SA NQF?
- How will the “adoption” of the term micro-credentials in our nomenclature make the SA NQF more current and relevant?
- How will its value-add/success/impact be measured?



Question?

What will the “formalization” of credentials with the qualifier “micro...” mean for the recognition/validation of credentials and “indication of suitability” for the types of people showcased here? and who might **NOT** necessarily have QA and certified credentials and/or micro-credentials?



Q: How can we re-imagine the SA NQF so that it remains current and relevant?

Some Next Steps...

- Shown we at SAQA as the custodians of the NQF, and in the service of LLL, are engaging deeply with this issue at both local and international level (and as part of a broader review process)



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- Must make informed choices based on evidence-based research which address the contextual and other stark realities of our country (low literacy and numeracy, multi-lingual, “triple threat” of poverty, inequality and unemployment etc.)



- We have initiated a series of public engagements and consultations to see how we might re-imagine the SA NQF in terms of currency and relevance (Qs: Should it continue as a Qualifications/ Part-qualifications/credits Framework ? or follow the global trend and use the term micro-credentials -with its proposed definitions? or adopt a 4th Sub-Framework etc.?)



Watch this space...

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