

**A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF MANAGING THE  
STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR THE  
LIFE INSURANCE INDUSTRY IN NAMIBIA**

**THESIS**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT)**

**of**

**Rhodes University**

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**December 2002**

## **ABSTRACT**

The development of standards for education and training is regarded as a very important activity by many countries. Any country that sets standards for education and training is trying to define its training system and avoid duplication of training by providers who do not see eye to eye. National standards are public documents accessible to anyone interested in education and training.

Namibia introduced standards setting as a core activity of administering the National Qualifications Framework in 1996 after the passing of the Namibia Qualifications Act by parliament.

This research attempts to gain an understanding of how the process of developing standards for the Life Assurance Sector in Namibia was managed by focusing on the experiences of three persons who took part in the process of developing the said standards. The case study approach enabled me to gain considerable insight into management issues that may have influenced the process of developing these specific standards.

The findings illuminate the management and leadership issues which characterised the process for the LA Industry. Several management issues emerge as key elements in the process. These include: A strong emphasis on transformational leadership through clear vision crafting; empowerment through emancipatory thinking; OD features such as problem solving and effective communication; the importance of organisational structure; the concept of a learning organisation and benchmarking as well as collegiality. This research explores the relationship between management thinking generally, and the management of the standards development process in particular.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Writing this thesis has been a very solitary experience for me. It is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks I have ever attempted.

I also realised early that a piece of work like this one which is more of an invention than anything else cannot be done without the help of many other brilliant people.

I therefore would like to thank the following people:

Prof Hennie Van der Mescht, my supervisor, for his outstanding and tireless support and his strong belief in my potential to complete this project. I owe a lot to his constant involvement in my work.

Mr Brent Richardson of NZQA who provided me with most of the material on international experiences of NQF related activities. Without his help this thesis would have been incomplete.

The three respondents for their willingness to participate in the project.

Finally, my family deserves the greatest gratitude for all their love and support. Taking up this study has put tremendous stress on my husband, Lawrence Kaimu, who listened and encouraged me, and who took care of our children Uaihamisa, Uundjorure and Metjandangi.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	Alliance for Construction Professionals
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
CBET	Competence based education and training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ETDP	Education and Training and Development Practitioner
ISO	International Organization for Standardisation
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
LAAN	Life Assurance Association of Namibia
MD	Managing Director
NAMLIFE	Namibia Life Assurance
NCAQS	Namibia Council for Architects and Quantity Surveyors
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NID	Namibia Institute of Democracy
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority

NQF	National Qualifications Authority
NSB	National Standards Body
NSSB	National Skill and Standard Board
NSSB	National Standards Setting Body
NTCL	Normas Técnicas de Competencia Laboral
NTQC	National Training Qualifications Council
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Authority
NSB	National Standards Body
NSSB	National Skill and Standard Board
NSSB	National Standards Setting Body
NTCL	Normas Técnicas de Competencia Laboral
NTQC	National Training Qualifications Council
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
OBET	Outcomes based education and training
PMETYC	Proyecto de Normalization dela Educacion Technica y la Capacitacion
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SANLAM	Suid-Afrikaanse Lewensversekering Maatskappy
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational and Education Council
SGB	Standards Generating Body
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
STPS	del Trabajo y Prevision Social
SWABOU	Suidwes Afrikaanse Bouvereniging
UIA	Union of International Architects
UK	United Kingdom
ZIMQA (proposed)	Zimbabwe Qualifications Authority

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

The following glossary provides definitions of terms as used in Namibia.

**Accreditation:** the process of establishing whether an organisation, through its system of quality management has the capacity to deliver high quality programmes and assess against standards.

**Assessor:** the person who is registered by the relevant quality assurance body to measure the achievement of specified NQF standards or qualifications.

**Certification:** documentary evidence that certain competencies have been achieved.

**Credit:** a value assigned to a standard reflecting the relative time and effort required by an average person to complete its outcomes.

**Credit transfer:** transferring credits between courses which lead to national qualifications

**Competence:** knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and the personal attributes that enable performs.

**Competency:** the combination of underpinning knowledge, skills and understanding that enables people to perform their work to a defined standard.

**Curriculum:** an overall plan containing the objectives, course modules, content outline, and delivery strategies for training people.

**Elements/Outcome:** the competencies which must be demonstrated for successful completion of a standard

**Learner:** a generic term for people in learning situations, includes student, participant and trainee

**Moderation of Assessment:** the process which ensure that assessment of competencies described in NQF standards is done fairly, validly and reliably.

**National standard/Unit standard:** nationally registered statements of education and training competencies and their associated performance criteria.

**NQF Levels:** the levels of the Framework defined in terms of progressive stages of competencies.

**Outcomes:** pre-determined results of learning

**Provider:** a person, institution or organisation providing education and training.

Qualification: an attestation or proof of having achieved certain specified competencies.

Quality Assurance: the process of ensuring that the degree of excellence is achieved.

Quality Audit: the process of examining the indicators which show the degree of excellence achieved.

Recognition of Prior Learning: the process of acknowledging competencies obtained outside formal education settings.

Registered standard: standards registered on the NQF.

Sector: a defined portion of social, commercial or educational activities used to prescribe the boundaries of a field.

Skills or abilities: what people must know in order to perform a job.

Stakeholders: anyone who is affected positively or negatively by the outcome of an event.

Standards: Criteria specifying how competence is measured.

Standards based education and training: education and training based on pre-agreed and defined standards.

Vocational education and training: used historically to refer to non-academic programmes, courses and qualifications, but the distinction between vocational and academic is becoming blurred.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

The pace of educational change in the United Kingdom and internationally has been accelerating in the 1980s and 1990s. The faltering economies of most developed countries have heightened the demand for strong links between education and the perceived needs of industry and commerce (Bush & West-Burnham, 1985:1)

The above statement, while referring specifically to developed countries, applies equally to developing countries such as Namibia. It is a fact that the pace of educational change is forcing countries in the SADC region to re-examine their education systems. Countries are required to produce students who are able to contribute to the economic success of the country immediately when they take up employment.

One is also tempted to ask: How is a country like Namibia preparing itself to find a way of narrowing the gap between the needs of education and those of industry, between the “world of curricula” and the “world of work” (Gunthorp 1998:9). In many countries the search for an answer to this significant question has led to substantial legislative changes in education. In the United Kingdom the Education Reform Act of 1988 was a direct result of an attempt to respond to the same question; New Zealand responded by establishing the Education Amendment Act of 1989, and in neighbouring South Africa the South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA) was born in 1995. Zimbabwe is currently busy reviewing its Education Act with the intention of establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and a Zimbabwe Qualifications Authority (ZIMQA) (Durango & Kohn, 2001) to administer the proposed Framework.

In Namibia the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act (NQA) of 1996 has led to the establishment of a body responsible for the development and administration of the NQF (Namibia, 1996). At the centre of finding a solution to this problem lies the notion of developing national standards. This is the focus of my research, springing

both from my concerns about education generally and its crucial role in enabling developing countries to develop to international standards, and from my exposure to education management and leadership thinking in the course of my studies. I begin by providing a short general overview of Namibia in the next section.

## **1.1 Background of Namibia**

### **1.1.1 Demographical background**

Namibia - formerly called South West Africa and prior to that German-West Africa - was a German colony until 1915 when it became a protectorate of South Africa under the mandate of the League of Nations and the United Nations. Namibia gained its independence in 1990. Currently the country has a population of 1,7 million and it occupies a land area of 824 269 square kilometres, stretching from the Orange River in the South up to the Okavango, Kunene and Zambezi in the North and North East respectively. The country shares borders with Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa (History and Background on Windhoek, 2001)

### **1.1.2 Educational history of Namibia**

Namibia inherited its education system from the previous South African administration. It was a system characterised by fragmentation of education and training, lacking co-ordination in term of quality, training duration, examination and certification. The system contributed to a high rate of unemployment in the country and provided limited access to further education amongst the majority. Independence – gained in 1990 – has led to radical educational reform, the adoption and promotion of a learner-centred education philosophy, and the gradual establishment of mechanisms which might in the future ensure that Namibians will be ready to meet the demands of the future. This is the role of the National Qualifications Authority (NQA); it is the vehicle through which the education system gears itself towards addressing the needs of the country, chiefly in industry.

## **1.2 Legal framework governing national standards development in Namibia**

The government of Namibia committed itself to the development of national standards when its Parliament passed the NQA Act, Act 29 of 1996 on 21 December 1996.

I am mindful that the area of developing standards and the management of this process are relatively new undertakings internationally, regionally and nationally and therefore feel obliged to give definitions early. In Namibia, even the structures responsible for this function are still not fully functional (e.g. the policies and NSSBs). The research is therefore looking at work in progress and continually unfolding. It is imperative for the reader to have a clear and common understanding of the terminology used in this research. Many of the concepts and terms used are drawn from the language of Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) and Outcomes Based Education and Training (OBET) as well as from the NQF 'language'. For the reasons cited above I therefore provide a glossary of terms to ease the task of the reader in grappling with so many acronyms and 'new' terminology. This may be found on page v.

I want to make a clear distinction early between the standards that I am referring to and other standards such as ISO 9000, which are product/service standards, or professional standards, which are criteria standards required by professional bodies in order for people to practise a specific profession. An example of the latter is the newly established Alliance for Construction Professionals (ACP) which requires aspiring practitioners to meet the criteria laid down by this body in order to practise in Namibia.

The Provisional Policy on Standard Setting in Namibia defines national standards as

nationally applied statements of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and special attributes required and combined through underlying understanding to carry out the roles or sets of tasks in a particular occupation and the criteria to be used to determine the achievement at a specified minimum level of performance (Namibia, 1999:5).

National standards are therefore consensus statements drawn up by all national stakeholders in education and training, indicating what the learner is able to do in a specific area, to what level, and in what circumstances.

National standards in general are a source of information to:

help people make informed decisions about the demands of employment, good practice in employment, the coverage and focus of services and the structures and content of education and training and related qualifications (Namibia, 1999: 7).

They therefore help to establish the link between aims and objectives of an organisation and what individuals need to be able to achieve. They may therefore be used for purposes such as the management and development of organisations and individuals, job design and recruitment, individual and team development and career planning and appraisal. Policy documents seem not to distinguish between the terms “national standards”, “unit standards”, and “national occupational standards”, and I use the terms interchangeable in this research.

### **1.3 Management implications associated with the change in the political system**

Reform processes are never easy, and for Namibia it has not been smooth nor tranquil (Angula, 2000: 16).

This is what the Minister of Higher Education, the Honourable Nahas Angula had to say in a commemorative publication of the Ministry on Namibia’s tenth anniversary as a way of describing the implications of change in the political system in Namibia. Education management is about developing the capacity to manage the change process while managing the people.

At independence, in 1990, the government of the Republic of Namibia created the Ministry of Education and Culture with the main purpose of restructuring the education system and to create a unified system of education. *Education for all* is the principal goal and commitment of the national system with the following major goals: access, equity, quality, democracy and efficiency (Namibia, 1998: 46).

Changes in the education system necessarily lead one to expect changes in the management of the system. The adoption of the education policy directive - *Toward Education for All* - also heralded a new era in the management of education in the country. In order to achieve the broad goals of education in terms of this directive, the recognition of the need for effective, goal-directed management was identified. The main idea behind this policy was the democratisation of education. A key feature of a democratised system is the practice of decentralisation, and it is possible to see evidence of this trait in the introduction of school boards to govern the schools. The intention here was to decentralise decision-making in particular and management at large to the community as well as to include a wide spectrum of role-players in the education system. The management of national standards is another example of the government's attempt to decentralise the education system. Since this is a study of management, I need to provide some guidelines to what I mean by the term at this early stage.

According to Thierart *et al.* (2001: 1) management is derived from the sixteenth century Italian word *maneggiare*, meaning to control and train with care and skill. Management can be defined as the way we guide, direct, structure and develop. Smit & Cronje (1997: 6) define management as "a process or series of activities that gives the necessary direction to an enterprise's resources so that its objectives can be achieved as productively as possible in the environment in which it occurs". Management is therefore concerned with maintaining the balance between the achievement of a common goal and the proper functioning of the group within a given context. In this study my concern is thus both with the achievement of a specific goal (the generation of national standards), and the functioning of the standards generating group responsible for this task. It seems that concern for task on the one hand, and for people and human relations on the other lies at the heart of management theory.

#### **1.4 The research in context**

In July 2000 the Life Assurance Sector under the auspices of the Life Assurers' Association of Namibia (LAAN) - the governing body for the Life Assurance Industry of Namibia - undertook the task of developing national standards for education and training for their industry (Namibia, 2000).

In my capacity as officer in the Standard Setting Division of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) (i.e. the unit responsible for the co-ordination of standards development) I developed an interest in the standard generating process. This study therefore arises from a desire on my part to expand my scientific knowledge in the area of standards development in general and in particular the case under discussion. My research goal is to understand how the process of developing the standards for the LA industry was managed. It is hoped that this understanding will enhance development of my knowledge and indirectly improve the functioning of the unit. It is also hoped that the research may enhance the understanding of standards generating processes in the Namibian community at large and encourage other scholars with an interest in the area to embark on similar studies to further develop our knowledge and understanding of such a key activity in the transformation process in Namibia and elsewhere. Other industry bodies wanting to develop standards may also use the findings of the research as a guide or learning experience.

The thesis follows a conventional order, where Chapter 1 – the Introduction - puts the research into a context by providing the background of the research, the research goals and the potential value of the research.

Chapter 2 – the *Literature Review* - presents the conceptual and analytical framework of standards development internationally, regionally and nationally. The chapter also attempts to critically establish possible links between standards development management and educational management theories.

Chapter 3 – the *Research Methodology* - starts with a general discussion of the main research paradigms followed by an exploration of the methodology of the research by giving a true account of my research journey. This chapter provides details and justification of the choices I made throughout the research, such as my research orientation, the methods employed for data collection, and how data was analysed and giving a justification of the choices made by the researcher. Attention is paid to the tensions and problems experienced during the whole research process as well as to the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 – the *Data Presentation* - describes and explains the raw data in a narrative way through identified categories. The connection between the research goal and the data analysis is clearly established here but discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 – the *Discussion of Findings* - provides a discussion of the main findings of the research by linking these to the research goals and research questions.

This chapter is also an attempt to put the findings into perspectives of existing management studies. Implications of the research are explored in both theoretical and practical terms.

Chapter 6 – the *Conclusion* - is a summary of the main findings and the potential value of the research. It also presents an analysis of the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

The world hates change yet that is the only thing that has brought progress (Smit & Cronje, 1997: 236).

The above quote echoes my sentiments about educational change in Namibia.

The shift in the political system in Namibia was a major strength for transforming the education system in this Southern African country. As mentioned earlier the transformation in education and training also heralded a paradigm shift in the management of the education system.

Education and Training is no longer seen as the responsibility and concern of the education department alone, but mainly the concern of the end-users, i.e. industry and the learners. The involvement of a wider representation in educational matters is proof of this paradigm shift. The involvement of a wider representation in educational matters has major implications for management. But why the change?

For many years education and training was a closed activity and major decisions would only be taken by the Department of Education, sometimes to the extent that school principals had no input into the content of the syllabi to be taught at the schools they were responsible for. Employers had to be satisfied with any product the education system handed them without questioning anything. Perhaps for Namibia and neighbouring South Africa the answer is simple; the recent changes in the governing systems may be used to explain this change. Yet this trend is observed everywhere, even in countries with no histories of *apartheid*. Thus one is forced to think more deeply. What has led to this worldwide change in the management of education?

The answer clearly lies in the realisation that education and industry cannot develop in isolation (Bush & West-Burnham, 1995). Education planners can no longer afford to develop training programmes without the input of industry. If countries such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand have committed themselves to changing their education systems which had prevailed for more than 50 years in order to involve more role players in the system, then perhaps the issue of wide participation in education and training needs further exploration.

This change in education and training management in most countries is underpinned by principles of national consistency and integration, democratic participation of stakeholders, equity and access. These principles are essential in determining the current and future orientation of education and training. Namibia being a secular and democratic country founded on democratic principles (Namibia, 1990: 2) is clearly addressing this challenge through its education system. Education transformation in Namibia is characterised by what Mathonsi (2001: 3) calls “a fundamental principle of decentralising power by allowing broader participation of interested parties and putting in place consultative mechanisms”. The management of national standards development in Namibia is an example of an "all- inclusive" approach adopted by the education system in this country, because it involves all national stakeholders in a specific industry to manage the process of setting standards.

Before discussing the management of standards development in the Life Assurance Sector in Namibia which is the subject of my research, I would like to look at key concepts such as outcomes-based and competence based approaches to education which are the major approaches underlying standards development. I will thereafter draw links between the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and standards development because the two are very closely intertwined (Seymour, 2000). Also, an understanding of the NQF is believed to enhance the understanding of unit standards because unit standards are the pillars of the NQF and necessarily developed to be registered on the NQF. A discussion of national standards is therefore incomplete without a basic understanding of the NQF.

## **2.2 Outcomes-based education (OBE) and/or competence-based education (CBET)**

The NQF is underpinned by an outcomes-based or a competence-based education philosophy. Outcomes-based education is defined by Towers (1996: 19) as a “learner-centred, results-oriented system founded on the belief that all individuals can learn”.

He lists four key requirements to make outcomes-based education work, namely:

- clearly defined learning outcomes;
- progress should be demonstrated;
- availability of multiple instructional and assessment strategies;
- time and assistance to enable student to reach maximum potential.

OBE is therefore about agreed upon outcomes of learning.

It is an approach to education that focuses on what learners know and can do after they have been taught. Spady & Marshall (1994: 30) define outcomes to reflect three things namely:

- what the student knows;
- what the student can actually do with what he or she knows ;
- the student's confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration.

Competence-based education is an approach based on competence where competence is defined as the ability to perform whole work roles to the standards expected in real working environments. Eraut (1994) suggests that the term competence may have some performance referencing. For example, when company managers say they have competent staff, then they may mean that they are properly qualified and competent but when a client describes a person as competent then they mean that they have received satisfactory service from that person. Competence in such a case tends to be treated as a characteristic of a person and not a statement referring to qualification. My own view of the notion of competence aligns itself with Short (1994) who argues that competence is not a descriptive concept but a normative one. Before a person can be judged as competent there needs to be agreement on a particular view of what a competent person is, what the scope of his/her competence will be, what criteria will be used to judge him/her and what will be regarded as sufficient evidence. Therefore

in defining competence one needs not only ask what *it is*, but what *it is in a particular situation*. It therefore includes those qualities of personal effectiveness that are required in the workplace to deal with co-workers, managers and customers. A competent person should not only know what to do but should be able to use the relevant skills in a work environment with all the ambiguities, pressures and uncertainties found in the environment.

Having considered the various definitions of OBE/CBET my next question is whether there is a significant difference between Outcomes-based and Competence-based education as used by qualifications authorities or whether it is merely a semantic debate. If one defines the two terms superficially, then one would say there is a difference because an outcome is the agreed upon result of learning while competence is a statement of knowledge, skills, attitudes and attributes required to perform a job in a particular situation. However, an outcome can be described in terms of a competence as well. I want to illustrate this link by means of the example of driving a car. Let us assume that to drive a car is the learning outcome needed by someone. The next step would be to consider the proof/evidence that you can drive a car. Showing the necessary knowledge, skills of driving, or the competence to drive the car may provide this proof. The learning outcome is described in terms of the competence required. I therefore argue that the two terms - though they are often used to refer to different things - are synonymous when applied in the context of standards development.

### **2.3 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**

As indicated in my introduction, the NQF has been regarded as a tool for transforming the education and training by many countries, e.g. the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Namibia. Hallendorf (1998: 1) defines the NQF as

a “national recognition system” of qualifications, which enables people to obtain national recognition for competence that they have demonstrated in some acceptable manner. It is not a new system of education and training as many people are tempted to think of it, but rather a new approach to education and training.

The system allows people to plan for their own education and to be assessed against nationally agreed upon standards at a time suitable to the person.

Parker (1999) defines the NQF as an attempt to bind knowledge, skills and values. As long as you can competently demonstrate that you have the knowledge, skills and values to perform to a specified level, then you can earn credit towards the standard.

I find Samuels' (2001) suggestion of the most important characteristics of a NQF very interesting and useful in providing an understanding of the most important characteristics of the NQF. Samuels (2001: 1-3) postulates that the most important characteristics of the NQF are its "openness and flexibility" in use. He uses a metaphor of the framework used for growing climbing plants to illustrate these two distinct characteristics of the NQF. According to him the framework used for growing climbing plants has to be "sturdy and well-made, strong enough to hold a tiny seedling that would develop into a mighty vine, but must have the right open spaces so that it does not limit, but rather encourages the growth of the vine" (Samuels, 2001: 3). In my opinion that is exactly what the NQF is. It is like the search for a golden mean between the task and person orientations in management thinking terms, very hard to achieve but possible. This illustration stresses points on a continuum rather than a dialectical view of the NQF. While it has to be strong, durable, firm and simple, it also has to be enabling, capable of change, open-ended and complex enough to accommodate a variety of situations, purposes and needs. How else can one describe the NQF?

In Namibia the legal basis for the NQF is the NQA Act. According to this Act (Namibia, 1996: 3) the objectives of the NQA are:

- (a) to set-up and administer a national qualifications framework;
- (b) to be a forum for matters pertaining to qualifications.

The NQA in Namibia is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF which *currently* consists of eight levels (Gunning, 1999). I use the term 'currently' here because having watched the developmental trends of NOF's levels worldwide, I have observed that the levels are not static; they are ever changing in order to accommodate the changing demands of the real life. I think this

can strengthen one's argument on the flexibility of the NQF. The NQF adopted by Namibia consists of eight levels with degrees of complexity of competencies increasing from level 1 up to 8. Scotland changed from a 5-level framework to a 12-level one (Gunning, 1999; Seymour, 2000) while New Zealand is busy introducing a change from an 8-level to a 10-level one to accommodate higher degrees, such as Masters and Doctorates.

An outcomes-based and/or competence-based approach to education and training underpins the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The outcomes and/or competencies are described in documents called unit standards in South Africa, NZ and Australia while Namibia and the UK refers to national occupational standards, national competence standards or national standards.

The unit standards/national standards are the building blocks of the NQF. The NQF is seen as a National recognition system aimed at transforming the education and training in the country, which enables us to recognise the skills and achievements of people. It aims to bring together all education and training, no matter when, where and how it was obtained in a single, unified co-ordinated system designed to foster life-long learning (Namibia, 2000-2005).

## **2.4 Defining National Standards**

In my search for a definition of national standards, I would like to pose the following question: What does the industry require people to know and do, and to what level/standard are they expected to do that?

Having defined competence earlier, defining national standards becomes much easier: a national standard describes a competence or a defined learning outcome in a particular situation, registered on the NQF at the appropriate level by the NQA. Jafta (1998: 11) defines national competency standards as nationally applied statements of knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal attributes required to carry out the roles or sets of tasks in a particular occupation and the criteria to be used to determine the achievement of a specified minimum level of performance. Within the context of the NQF, national standards are the documents which provide descriptions of what

industry needs. A national standard is therefore a statement of competence and comprises a set of units of competence further subdivided into elements of competence. Standards-based education and training as defined by Seymour (2000) refers to those delivery programmes, course and qualifications based on standards registered by the qualifications authority in a specific country.

The policy on setting standards in Namibia outlines the different parts or components of a national standard, namely the units of competency, the elements of competency, the performance criteria and the range statements. During the occupational mapping or scoping exercise industries identify the major functions of the occupational class and derives the units. The elements are a further division of the units while the performance criteria specify the types of performance required and how well they are performed. The following chart, Figure 1 describes the components of a national standard in Namibia.

A national standard consists of the following main components:

**Unit:** Is the title describing what the standard is all about?

**Element:** Is a description of what the person is able to do and demonstrate.

**Performance Criteria:** Is the standard of performance expected in work and it is the one against which performance can be assessed.

**Range Statement:** Specifies the context and conditions under which the element can be expected to be performed.

**Generic Competencies:** Specify the general or core competencies required by anybody for any qualification or unit standard. The NQA determines the generic competencies.

**Underpinning Knowledge:** Is the underlying knowledge for a particular standard.

Figure 1: Components of a national standard in Namibia from the Provisional Policy on Standards Setting in Namibia (Namibia, 1999: 10).

An example of the standards developed for the Life Assurance Industry is attached as Appendix E. This standard is a unit standard because it provides a direct link of the national standard to a qualification.

### **2.4.1 Applicability of National Standards**

National Standards exist for the following reasons:

- to inform the public and employers about the claims to competence of the qualifications, i.e. the value of a qualification
- to inform providers of education and training both in higher education and in public or commercial practice about the outcomes of learning, i.e. no learning should be done merely for its own sake
- to be incorporated into regulations or criteria for the approval of courses
- to provide guidance for learners and trainers about what they have to learn
- to provide a foundation for the design of valid assessment systems for national qualifications
- to establish international equivalences and/or criteria for granting professional status in Namibia to those who have trained abroad.

### **2.4 How do national standards differ from professional standards and other standards (e.g. quality standards)?**

Jafta (1998) suggests that professional standards are standards which allow one to enter a certain profession, drawn up by professional bodies. In Namibia these bodies are legislated groups which are well defined and organised around their professions. Professionals in the sector control these bodies and have overall control over the entry to those professions through the maintenance of professional standards.

In order for one to become, say, an architect in Namibia one needs to meet the standards required by the Namibia Council for Architects and Quantity Surveyors (NCAQS). The standards are drawn up and approved by the same council. Given the history of *apartheid* in Namibia, professional standards have become very controversial because the composition of these councils reflected the *apartheid* philosophy, a philosophy based on the exclusion of some from participation.

Professional standards describe the ethical code of conduct for the profession and the minimum entrance requirements expected in terms of qualifications as well as registration with an accredited international body responsible for that profession.

Figure 2 (below) is an example of a professional standard.

An Architect in Namibia should therefore meet the following professional standards:

5 years of full time study of architectural course

accredited by UIA

two years' practical experience

Figure 2: An example of professional standards (from the document on the establishment of the ACP, Namibia, 200: no page numbers). Comparing this list with Figure 1 (which illustrate the components of a national standard) it is easy to note the differences between the two. Professional standards are more like the entrance requirements for a profession.

A third kind of standard, quality standards, are products and service standards. They can help both product and service organisations achieve standards of quality that are recognised and respected throughout the world (Quality Standards [no author], 2002). An organisation that wants to meet certain standards (like ISO 9000, ISO 9002 or ISO 9003) because they feel they want to control the quality of its products and services or reduce the costs with poor quality or become more competitive, will develop a quality system that meets the criteria of the identified standard. Once the system has been developed and implemented, it will carry out an internal audit to make sure the system is working. Thereafter it will invite accredited external auditors to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality system. If the auditors like what they see they will certify the organisation accordingly, issue a certificate and record the organisation's achievements in their registry. This entitles the organisation to announce to the world that the quality of its products and services are managed by an international body and up to international standards.

## **2. 5 The development of national standards in Namibia**

In terms of the Provisional Policy on Standard Setting (Namibia, 1999: 12), the NQA recognises the bodies responsible for the development of standards. These bodies are popularly known as the National Standards Setting Bodies (NSSBs), a name that is somehow misleading because they do not engage in the actual development/setting of standards but approve the standards developed by the Standards Generating Body where these are in place. During the development of the life assurance standards the professional body - LAAN - and other nominated people made up the composition of the NSSB.

The NSSBs appoint the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) which engage in the actual development of standards. Draft standards are forwarded to the NSSB for approval. The NSSB will ensure that national consultation has taken place and recommend the standards for registration on the NQF to the NQA Secretariat in the Standards Setting Division.

The Standard Setting Division conducts an evaluation of the standards and writes a report which is forwarded to the NSSB. If everything is in place standards are recommended to the NQA Council for registration on the NQF. The Life Assurance Industry was an SGB of the NSSB responsible for Business (Commerce) in terms of the approved organising fields of the NQA. Currently no standards have been registered on the Namibian NQF because as I explained in my introduction, the systems and structures responsible are in the process of being established.

Figure 3 below illustrates the process:

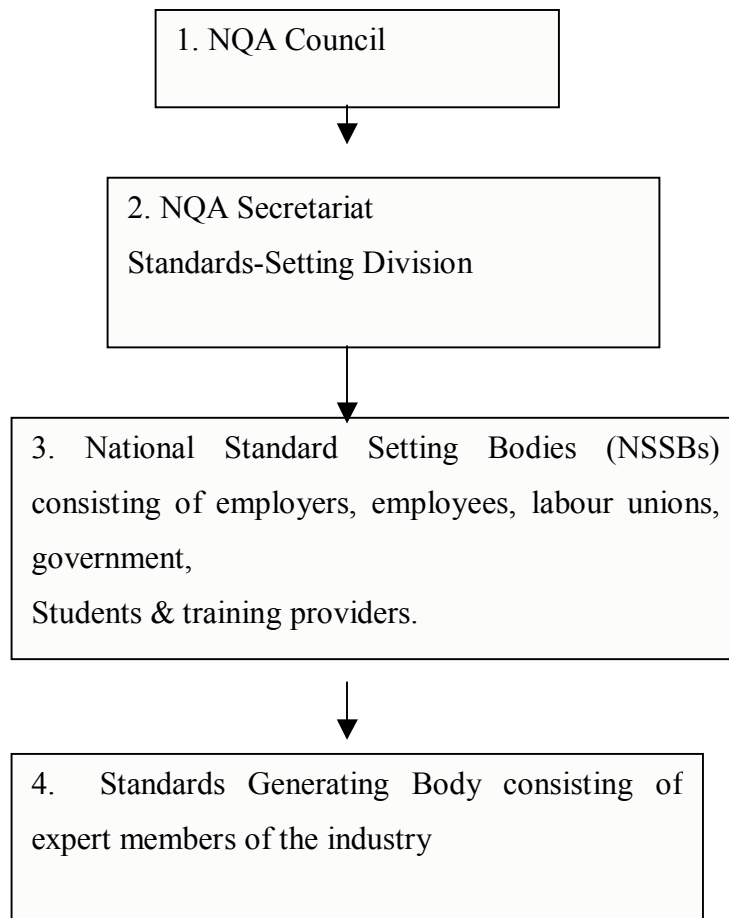


Figure 3: A diagrammatic representation of the process of managing standards in Namibia (Namibia, 1999: 7).

To summarise, the steps are as follows:

- The NQA Council recognises the NSSB and endorses the standards; the council manages the initial and final process.
- The NQA Secretariat provides guidelines in terms of criteria.
- The NSSB conducts the sectoral analysis, appoints the SGB and manages the process before approving the standards.
- The SGB does the actual development, and members commit themselves to completing the project.

The NQA Council consists of 36 persons. Membership of the NSSB varies according to the industry, e.g. the Life Assurance has no labour unions and training in this area is workplace-based. There are no real students because the training is provided on the job, perhaps workers-cum-learners, but the situation may be different in another industry. Decision-making becomes decentralised from the central authority (NQA) to the NSSBs and eventually to the SGBs.

The Life Assurance Industry in Namibia (the focus of this study) is regulated by the Long-term Insurance Act, Act, 5 of 1998, and membership consists of the following companies: Sanlam Namibia, Swabou Life, Old Mutual Namibia, Metropolitan Life, Namlife, Fedsure and Capricorn Life (Life Assurers Association of Namibia, 2001).  
International and regional perspectives of managing the standards development

Here I draw on the experiences of six other countries which have been engaged in standards development for several years, namely the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, the USA and South Africa.

The United Kingdom which geographically covers England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland has similar arrangements for standards development. The UK, where the idea of the NQF has the longest history, introduced a system of a comprehensive Qualifications Framework in 1986 following a review of Vocational Qualifications. The system was administered by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Department of Labour (Handley, 2001). The NCVQ as well as SCOTVEC (its counterpart in Scotland) was wound up and in 1997 under the Education Act of 1997 and their successors, QCA and SQA were established. These bodies are equivalent to the NQA, SAQA and the proposed ZIMQA in Zimbabwe (Durango & Kohn, 2001).

Since 1997 the QCA and SQA have been responsible for developing and implementing a NQF of five levels and three categories of qualifications namely general, vocational and occupational. Scotland has an SCQF of 12 levels as indicated in my discussion of the NQF at the beginning of this chapter (Scotland, 2001).

The QCA/SQA operates under a statutory remit laid down in the Education Act of 1997 and within a policy framework agreed annually with the Secretary for Education and Employment via the Department for Education and Employment. They both have overall responsibility for the management and funding of the national occupational standards as well as the approval of the National Occupational Standards (NOS). The development of NOS is initiated and financially supported by the UK government with funds from a 10% levy on NVQ/SVQ certificates (Handley, 2001).

NOS are developed and implemented by employer-led standards setting bodies called National Training Organisations (NTOs). These standards are developed on a countrywide basis. There are currently  $\pm$  73 National Training Organisation (NTOs) in the UK. The NTOs appoint Qualifications Committees who then develop the NOS (National Training Organisations, 2001). NTOs will then approve the standards and recommend them for endorsement to the QCA/SQA. This is very similar to the situation in Namibia. What is different is that while the UK has some clarity on funding arrangements for the standards development process, this is not the case in Namibia.

In Australia competency standards development is also restricted to nationally recognised bodies. They must be bipartite and representative of an industry or significant industry sector. These bodies are called Industry Training Advisory Bodies or ITABs. They comprise key stakeholders such as employer associations, unions and major enterprises. In 2001 there were 23 recognised bodies and 5 recognised sectors.

The Board of Australia National Training Authority (ANTA) recognises these bodies. Training providers are not directly represented on the ITABs, because they are mandatory bodies who review the training packages. What is striking in the Australian model of standards development is the use of training packages, which consist of competency standards and qualifications. Most competency standards within a training package are reviewed every three years (Lewis, 2001). There is therefore a direct link between standards and qualifications.

When draft standards are completed after national consultation and validation, State and Territory government training authorities first evaluate them before forwarding

them to ANTA to ensure they can be legitimately implemented in the national training framework. ANTA will then submit the standards to an expert national panel, the National Training Quality Council (NTQC), for endorsement. Unlike in Namibia and the UK where the authorities are responsible for endorsement this is not the case in Australia.

The ITABs and most bodies working on developing national standards have legal corporation status. They are independent of government and only report against projects that are publicly funded (Lewis, 2001). Another important difference is the funding arrangements; most of these bodies in Australia are self-funding.

According to Seymour (2000), in New Zealand the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) maintains the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and coordinates the setting of standards in areas where there is no Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), meaning that some standards are developed by ITOs while others are developed by NZQA. ITOs are the bodies responsible for setting standards for their industries and are funded by the New Zealand Government, not the NZQA. The role of NZQA in managing the process is thus different from the other two countries I have looked at so far; similar to what Australia is doing but different in terms of funding arrangements.

The system of ITOs and participation in the Industry Training Strategy is voluntary. This has resulted in uneven participation across industries (Hamill, 2001). ITOs are primarily representatives of industry because of the funding arrangements. Learner representation is variable and depends on the ITO. As a general rule ITOs governing bodies are made up of enterprises rather than chambers of commerce although they are involved in the development and review of standards. One can equate the composition of ITOs with most Professional bodies in Namibia.

According to Hamill (2001) most ITOs are incorporated societies, although a few are limited liability companies and others are sub-sections of larger organisations e.g. the Boating ITO, which is a business unit of the Boating Industry Association. The law requires that ITOs become a body corporate and have separate accounts that can be audited. The NZQA requires that the CEO of an ITO attests that appropriate

consultation has occurred in the development of standards. NZQA's role is endorsing the standards but the management of standards is fully decentralised to ITOs.

Consultation and validation of draft standards may vary according to industry. Some may only use Qualifications Standing Committees while others may require the use of identified industry experts. Just as in Australia, New Zealand standards development is voluntary and currently only 8 industries are operational.

Although the United States of America (USA) does not administer a Qualifications Framework as we know it in Namibia progress made in the management of standards developments is worth noting. The National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) was established by the National Skill Standards Act of 1994. Literally speaking and in terms of our definition of competence, the US model focuses only on the ability to perform a skill and issues of context may not be considered. It is the catalyst in stimulating the development and use of a voluntary national system of skill standards in the US (Velaquez, 2001). The government funds the development of skills standards and industry-led coalitions called Voluntary Partnerships (VPs) which support this work in specific areas. Voluntary Partnerships involve the active participation of business and labour representatives, educators, trainers and community-based groups. Validation of skill standards is done through the use of surveys, expert panels and extensive research analysis.

Each VP performs an internal review of the standards through its Standards Committee, Steering Committee and the VP Management. The VP will then submit the skill standards to the NSSB and the Technical experts in the NSSB will conduct the review. The NSSB will then submit the skill standards to the Endorsement Review Panel, which in turn will submit them further to the NSSB Staff and to the NSSB Endorsement Committee of the Board. The Endorsement Committee of the Board will recommend skill standards for approval. The validation of the US model of skills standards development proves to be the lengthiest of all the countries I have discussed.

The Mexican Model of Labour Competency implements a national qualifications system. The Mexican model is a result of the Technical Education and Training

Modernization Project *a traves del (Proyecto de Modernization dela Educacion Technica y la Capacitacion, PMETYC)*. The project is governed by the Public Education and Work and Social Welfare Secretariats, *Secretarias de Educacion Publica (SEP), del Trabajo y Prevision Social (STPS)* which are equivalent to the Department of Education and the Department of labour in the UK or in South Africa and the National Council for Standardisation and Certification of Labour Competencies (*Consejo de Normalization y Certification de Competencia Laboral, CONOCER*) with financial support from the World Bank. CONOCER is in charge of the promotion of standards and integration of standards in a nation-wide qualifications system. CONOCER is like SAQA in South Africa which is answerable to the Ministry of Education as well as the Ministry of Labour.

Labour Competency Technical Standards (*Normas Technicas de Competencia Laboral, NTCL*) are developed by Lead Bodies or National Training Organisation. Currently 57 Lead Bodies and 5 independent sub-lead bodies are operational. The Mexican model is very similar to the UK one in terms of management.

In neighbouring South Africa the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) oversees the development of the NQF through - amongst other functions - the registration of the National Standards Bodies and Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs). The NQF is divided into 12 organising fields for which there is an NSB allocated to each field. NSBs are responsible for establishing SGBs and recommending the standards generated by the SGBs to SAQA (Mohamed & Faku, 2001).

Each NSB is made up of representatives from each of the six national stakeholders categories comprising the state (in particular that of the Department of Education and Labour), organised business, organised labour, education and training providers, and critical interest groups (such as professional bodies, professional institutions and examining bodies). The allocated membership per category is six, bringing the composition of each NSB therefore to a total of 36 persons while SGBs may not exceed 25 unless deemed otherwise by SAQA.

NSBs are established and funded by SAQA and they in turn establish the SGB by defining the sub-fields. The SGBs are self-funded and they generate and review the standards as well as recommending the standards to SAQA. The SGBs are not permanent structures and are dissolved when the standards development process is completed. Normally a lifespan of between three and ten years is allowed. Though the process reflects a way of working through a partnership, the management of standards development in South Africa is highly centralised within SAQA with the SAQA appointed NSB Co-ordinator being part and parcel of every stage of the process (Mohamed & Faku, 2001).

Although I have discussed the different models of managing standards development separately I am now in a position to comment on what features appear to be common to all models. Since my interest is primarily in how a standards generating process was managed, an understanding of such ‘universal’ features provides a broader and more secure base from which to operate.

## **2.7 A global picture**

What emerges from the above analysis may at first glance appear to be a proliferation of committees and sub-committees and may look like bureaucracy gone mad. But it is possible to see how and why this has come about. The need to be both internationally competitive and fully accountable on one hand, and representative and transparent on the other inevitably translates into the creation of new structures. The fact that in nearly every case the system has unfolded into basically four levels of governance is probably the result of international consultation, learning from each other; but it may equally mean that a process as complex as generating national standards requires at least this level of complexity. There are several other interesting aspects worth discussing (such as funding), but for my purposes I shall focus only on how the lowest rung in the ladder (the groups who actually write the standards) function, particularly in the light of the complexity within which they exist. Samuels’ analogy is worth repeating here, since it points to the central tension in a system which needs to be rigorous and to some extent bureaucratic, while at the same time encouraging the kind of creativity that makes the writing of unique statements that express desired skills

and values possible. The system needs to be “sturdy and well-made ...” but also “...have the right open spaces so that it does not limit, but rather encourages the growth of the vine” (Samuels, 2001: 3). As mentioned earlier, this metaphor highlights the central tension in managing any system, namely the tension between task and person orientation. The next section will therefore provide a brief overview of education leadership and management theories that seem to speak to the process of standards development. Here I am embarking on unknown territory, since, to my knowledge, the functioning of a standards generating body has never been investigated from the point of view of human and organisational interaction. My study therefore becomes exploratory in this regard.

I am also conscious of mentioning the term ‘leadership’ for the first time in my thesis and this needs an explanatory note. Upon reviewing the literature I became aware of "the huge areas of overlap" between management and leadership, both in theory and practice (Van der Mescht, 1996: 7). While the generally accepted distinction of management being about maintenance and leadership about innovation is useful, it seemed clear to me that there was indeed sufficient overlap to allow me to draw freely on both fields.

## **2.8 Educational leadership and management theories and the management of standards development**

In broad terms the evolution of management thinking over the past decades may be described as a move away from centralised, bureaucratic control – such as is evident in classical management theory – to a more democratic, participative style, also described as “collegial” (Bush, 1995: 53-65). This narrative is well covered in mainstream literature on the subject, and it would be inappropriate to present it here. I choose rather to focus on specific aspects of current management theory and practice in education in an attempt to consider how these may be informing the standards generating process.

As has been mentioned above, the standards development management structures adopted by most countries have much in common. The trend seems to be same

everywhere. The structures responsible for this function world-wide have similar responsibilities with differences only in names, e. g. NTOs in the UK, ITABs in Australia, VPs in the USA, ITOs in New Zealand, Lead Bodies in Mexico, NSBs in South Africa and NSSBs in Namibia. The proliferation of new bodies (and consequently new names) may well give the impression of increased bureaucratic complexity, but in all cases the principles guiding the processes are those of inclusion and democratic participation. The same structures also have similar functions with regard to standards development, namely to approve standards set by the sub-structures (e. g. SGBs, SSBs, Qualifications Standing Committees etc.) and to submit the standards to the regulatory bodies such as QCA, ANTA, NZQA, NQA. .

A significant difference, however, lies in the extent to which different countries have devolved the management of this function. While a country like New Zealand has fully decentralised this function, and even relies on the goodwill of ITOs to attest to the consultation process, a country like South Africa is an example of a highly centralised system of standards development management where there is maximum involvement of the state-run SAQA in the process.

The management systems also place emphasis on narrow and broad consultation through validation checks. Before standards are endorsed as public documents, the responsible bodies must prove to the regulatory bodies that consultation was done according to the criteria set by the authority. In some cases the standards must pass through a chain of extended validation checks before final approval (for example the US model). The idea is to ensure that all national stakeholders have been consulted and given input or are satisfied with the standards.

All the countries that I have looked at clearly promote this participatory approach to standards development, a partnership approach. This is in line with much current debate on democratic management approaches. Bush (1995) describes democratic management approaches as a management approaches which emphasise that power and decision making be shared among some or all members of the organisation.

According to Bush & West Burnham (1996) this approach to management is related to a trend towards institutional autonomy which is occurring in many parts of the

world. In South Africa, for example, the influential Task Team Report on Education Management Development (South Africa, 1996) promotes the notion of self-management, both as a more efficient way of working and as a move towards transformation. In this particular case, the need for devolution of power and individual empowerment is a reaction against the authoritarianism which characterised the *apartheid* government education systems.

The move towards self-management in educational institutions is based on the understanding that decisions should be made by those who best understand the needs of the industry and local community, those nearest to the problem (South Africa, 1996). Members are expected to manage themselves at every level. What makes the standards development process stand out for me is the fact that all the stakeholders play a part in identifying and planning for the needs of the industry, which may become a source of motivation to the members to work hard towards achieving the goal of managing the process. This notion finds support in literature on organisation development (OD), where the idea of playing a role in diagnosing the problem is seen to equip the individual with better skills and enthusiasm to find solutions to the problem. Indeed, OD rests on the assumption that organisation members themselves have the capacity to identify and solve problems. If industry members are involved in all the processes leading towards solving their problems, then they may develop a better understanding of the nature of the problem and become more committed towards the course.

Caldwell and Spinks (1992 cited by Bush & West-Burnham 1995) argue that devolving power to institutions should be matched by empowering people with the necessary skills to manage themselves which in turn will improve leadership. The experiences in Namibia and South Africa have shown that being part of the standards development process is in itself an empowering process, because most of the people who joined the process as simply members of SGBs or NSBs ended up becoming expert consultants in the area.

The way the structures function in setting standards can be likened to a political democracy where several parties are elected on the basis of proportional representation, with an independent judiciary (in this case the authorities) to see that

the parties (standards setting bodies) abide by the law (criteria) governing them. In a democracy leaders require followers to participate in all activities and delegate responsibilities. Dewey (cited in Carr & Hartnett 1996: 60) argues that:

a democracy is a society that aspires to contribute to the growth of all its members. It is a society, which has created the conditions under which its members can collectively determine the future of their society on the basis of their shared "social intelligence".

A democracy is therefore a society in which all members collectively discuss issues which they themselves recognise as having practical significance for the conduct and organisation of their own life. I concur with Gates (2000) who argues that autonomy is the pathway to genuine democracy. Quoting Carl Jung and Adam Smith he further suggests that you cannot fully become human in isolation. One can only define oneself within a society. Healthy societies encourage close ties and mutual interdependence.

This notion of interdependence is line with Mbigi & Maree's (1995) *ubuntu* philosophy, and Khoza's (1994: 122) "community concept". These philosophies can enhance one's understanding of managing standards development, especially in an African context, because they are both based on the perception that organisations are like communities to which one belongs. Both the *ubuntu* philosophy and the community concept are based on the saying: *Umuntu ngumintu ngabantu* ", which literally translated simply means, " a person is a person through other human beings."

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that the community metaphor is a uniquely an African way of thinking. Indeed the idea was first given currency by an American, T.J. Sergiovanni (1994: 2), who suggested that community might serve as a more appropriate metaphor for schools than 'organisation'. He explains:

Changing the metaphor for the school from organization to community changes what is true about how schools should be organize and run, about what motivates teachers and students, about what leadership is, how it should be practiced.

He further postulates that communities are socially organised around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them and instead of being bonded by formal

structural arrangements they are bonded by this relationships of shared values, sentiments and beliefs that create in them the sense of oneness.

These principles also resonate with what Burns says about transformation leadership in that it recognises the fact that the person being managed can have significant input and is a “manager in the making” (Book Review, no date). By participating in the process, be it as an SGB member or even as a facilitator, one is, however indirectly, managing the process. Hoy & Miskel (1996: 393) citing Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) suggest that:

The basis of transformational leadership is in the personal values and beliefs of the leaders. By expressing their personal standards, transformational leaders are able to both unite followers and change their goals and beliefs in ways that produce higher levels of performance than previously thought possible.

Bass & Avolio (1994) argue that transformational leadership also refers to leaders who **change** things successfully and can manage successfully during the process of change. Thus current management and leadership approaches emphasise change and appear to be in search of the best approach and managers expected to be "transformers" of the change process.

Charlton (1992: 7) cited by Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999: 283) argues that:

in an environment where change is occurring, leaders need to personalise responsibility by creating a context in which routine jobs become meaningful, the human spirit is liberated and people are transformed from a position of “working to live” to a position of “living to work.”

Most standards development projects will commence with an occupational mapping/scoping process/industry analysis where the standards setting body maps the sector as it currently stands, describes the nature and characteristics of the sector, the key areas, the numbers of people employed, the trends and skills required now and in the future (O’Sullivan, 2001). Thus broad participation begins from the earliest stage. The Qualifications Authorities define the culture by setting the atmosphere and communicating the vision, thus playing the inspiring role of a transformational leader.

The Authorities also play an empowering role through sharing and distributing powers. The Authorities are not the only managers of this activity but the different structures all have a part to play in the management of standards development.

The Qualifications authorities delegate standards development to the recognised standards setting bodies. In transformational leadership one expects leaders to define the need for change, to concentrate on long-term goals, and to create new visions (Bass & Avolio, 1994); so too, the bodies responsible for managing standards development (NTOs, NSBs, NSSBs etc.) are defining the vision of the industry or sector by describing its nature and looking at the developmental trends, thereby concentrating on the long-term goals of the industry (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In my opinion both the authorities and the NSSBs have the potential to play a role of visionary transformational leadership. They are in a position to provide meaning and a challenge to the work of their followers, in this case the SGB members.

Because this paradigm shift is a change in itself and new to the practitioners, the future is also determined by experiencing it. For example countries which first initiated this approach (like the UK and Australia) are still adjusting and re-adjusting their structures. In this sense standards development is aptly captured in Bush's model of ambiguity which assumes that the instability and complexities of institutional life often result in uncertainty and unpredictability of organisations (Bush 1995: 111). The ambiguity model is generally an accurate depiction of organisational functioning in times of rapid and far-reaching change. There seems some truth to the notion that while the world we live in is often referred to as the age of information and the knowledge age, it can as well be referred to as the age of ignorance when the onslaught of information has been accompanied by less clarity. Our enhanced ability to describe is coupled with less ability to make sense of what we see or where we mean to go.

This can be explained in terms of Bush's (1996) theory of ambiguity which suggests that because individuals are part-time members (as is the case with standards generating members who move in and out of the picture according to the interests of participants) participation may become fluid. The same theory also stresses the

advantages of decentralisation of decision-making which avoids the delays and uncertainties associated with bureaucratic management.

Grobler (1996 cited by Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk 1999: 282) asked the question:

What type of leadership approach should be followed by South African companies?

The same question can be re-formulated to accommodate management. He suggests that it is important to choose a leadership that will enable people to reach levels that were never before achieved. According to him the desired results can be found in transformational leadership.

## **2. 7 Conclusion**

When I started reviewing the literature I had a strong conviction that democratic management and transformational leadership were the only management theories that could explain the process of managing the standards development process. I realised that they are not the only theories and to be fixated on them would miss out on other important influences, e.g. the cultural theories. It is of course impossible, especially in a multicultural society such as Namibia, to de-link education from the transmission of culture. In a culturally sensitive management model, members learn to deal with cultural differences in a constructive and positive manner by promoting unity among the people (Bush, 1995: 130-131). The human relations theories of Mayo (Hoy and Miskel, 1996: 12) and theories of group dynamics may explain this process in that people work well amongst their peers as they develop feelings of belonging.

At the same time though, as has been noted, aspects of bureaucratic management practices are noticeable in the standard generating systems. There is, for example, a clear division of labour because the tasks are too complex to be performed by a single individual (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Thus many different bodies with different functions need to exist, which in turn leads to many formal procedural operations (such as meetings). This is of course inevitable, and is perhaps a factor of the complexity and scope of the task rather than a mindset. Ultimately one can say that managing national standards is a communal activity where every member's participation may lead to a sense of belonging. Any community is built on close

interpersonal relationships developed through sharing the same values and aspirations, and the same may be true of standards development bodies.

In the next chapter I discuss my research methodology.

# CHAPTER 3

## Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a brief discussion of the different research paradigms and the two main research approaches. This is followed by a discussion of the case study approach and a look at some of the key issues related to research such as objectivity, validity and ethics. An outline of the research process undertaken will conclude the chapter.

### 3.2 What is a paradigm?

Guba (1990: 17) as quoted by Dison (1998) defines a paradigm as “a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether everyday.... variety or action taken in connection with disciplined enquiry”. The term *paradigm* is a *Greek* word referring to the way we see the world not in terms of visual sense but in terms of perceiving, understanding and interpreting (Covey, 1989). Covey refers to it as a frame of reference or “mental maps” (Covey, 1989: 11) through which we see the world. I support the view that the way we see the world plays a very important role when doing research, because we are influenced largely by the mental maps we have.

How do I for example perceive reality? Is there a fixed reality out there or is it given meaning by the individual perceiving it? The way in which I attempt to answer this question already provides me with an “epistemological positioning” or stance (Thierart *et al.*, 2001: 19). We are naturally guided by our frame of reference or paradigms that may have resulted from our socialisation processes or other factors.

Bassey (1995: 12) defines a paradigm as:

A network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers, which adhered to by a group of researchers,

conditions the pattern of their thinking and underpin their research actions.

The four main research paradigms will be discussed here.

### **3. 3 Positivism**

This paradigm considers that reality is independent of what individuals perceive and is governed by universal laws. To understand this reality one must try to explain it, to discover the simple and systematic associations between variables underlying a phenomenon (Kerlinger (1973 cited by Thierart *et al.* 2001).

From this viewpoint the research problem consists of examining facts. Researchers following this paradigm construct their research problem by identifying inadequacies or inconsistencies in existing theories, or between theories and facts (Landry, 1995 cited by Durrheim & Terre Blanche, 1999).

The research aims at correcting the identified inconsistencies or to provide an accurate description of the laws and mechanisms that operate in social life (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Cantrell (1993:83) suggests that the purpose of research in the positivist paradigm is to “discover laws and generalizations which explain reality and allow to predict and control”. This paradigm is therefore interested in testing hypotheses and is effective where calculations and measurements are involved. Positivists attempt to test theory in an attempt to increase the predictive understanding of phenomena. According to Yin (cited by Winegardner, 2001) in this paradigm knowledge is gained through scientific and experimental research and it is objective and measurable.

### **3.3 Interpretivism**

Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) argue that the researcher working in this paradigm believes that the reality to be studied consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world. For the interpretivist, reality is mental and perceived, the

researcher and subject studied interact. The goal of the interpretivist is not to discover reality and the laws underlying it, but to develop an understanding of social realities, meanings, the culturally shared meanings, and the contexts in which these constructions are taking place.

The researcher begins from an interest in the phenomenon he or she wishes to study and then decides to develop an inside understanding. Although the interpretivist may enter the research problem with prior knowledge of the phenomenon, she/he does not work from established guidelines or strict rules. He/she will constantly seek to adapt to the changing environment and to develop empathy for its members. Interpretive researchers assume that access to reality is through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. The interpretive paradigm is also called the constructivist, symbolic or hermeneutic paradigm (Dison, 1998). This is the paradigm in which I will work and it will be discussed in the outline of my research process.

### **3.4 Critical theory/Constructionism**

For the constructionist, knowledge and reality are created in the mind. There is no unique real world that pre-exists independently from human mental activity and language: all observation depends on its observer, including data, laws of nature and external objects.

The knowledge sought by constructionists is therefore contextual and relative. Constructing a research problem for the constructionist is to design a goal-oriented project. The project originates in the identification of a need to alter traditional responses to a given context, to change accepted modes of action or thought.

The researcher in this paradigm believes that reality consists of a fluid and variable set of social constructions (Durrheim & Terre Blanche, 1999). According to Connole (1993) this paradigm is modelled on Marxism, interpretive psychoanalytic studies which focus on the insights and judgements of the subjects and knowledge generated by this paradigm serves the purposes of assisting personal liberation and understanding and emancipation from forces constraining the rational independence

of individuals. Winegardner (2001) argues that this paradigm is an ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression, often aimed at influencing policy or generating action (Merriam, 1998 cited by Winegardner 2001).

### **3.5 Deconstructivism/Post-structuralism/Discourse Analysis**

The researcher working under this paradigm believes that there is no reality accessible to human beings beyond language (Connole, 1993). She/he further argues that reality is constituted in and through language (as discourse). Meanings are discursive and plural because there is no fixed meaning. Meaning shifts according to its contexts and the motivation of speakers/writers and listeners/readers. Truth and knowledge are thus never value-neutral but the effects of power. A common methodology employed in this paradigm is discourse analysis, which is an analysis of (usually written) text in terms of how it positions the reader, and in terms of the assumptions of the writer.

### **3.6 Qualitative *versus* quantitative research**

In qualitative research the nature of the data to be collected corresponds to words while in quantitative it corresponds to figures (Miles and Hubermann, 1994).

According to Silverman (1993), when researchers direct their work towards verification they have a clear and definite idea of what they are looking for, while if they are carrying out explorative research, typified by theoretical construction, researchers are often far less sure of what they may find. It is therefore conventional to link investigation to qualitative approach while verification is linked with a quantitative approach.

Punch (1998) suggests that the focus of quantitative approach is more often on comparison of extensive data measured at the beginning and end of a period of time, with results being expressed as percentages, graphs or other quantifiable measurements.

Quantitative approaches offer greater assurances of objectivity than qualitative because they can be easily subjected to instruments of measurements, which are constant. It is therefore not surprising that this approach is grounded in a positivistic paradigm.

According to Erikson (1986) the most distinctive feature of qualitative research is its emphasis on interpretation, not simply that of the researcher but more importantly, that of the individuals who are studied. Another major difference between the two approaches as identified by Barnes (1995), is the position of the researcher in the research. In quantitative approach the researcher tries to remove her/himself from the involvement in any personal way with the people or items being researched while qualitative researchers have a more participant role, even living the lives of the groups they are researching.

Also in a qualitative approach the research question may evolve during the research process, while it is more difficult to change the research question during the rigid process that is required by the quantitative approach (Stake, 1995). Features of this approach will also be dealt with in my research process because it is the approach I used.

### **3.7 Key issues related to doing research**

Bassey (1995: 2) defines research as” systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge”. If I consider this definition to be relevant to research in general, then I believe that the manner in which research is carried out must be subjected to some criteria. How do I for example determine that I was critical in my endeavours without an understanding of objectivity in research? How systematic is my research if I did not record the systematic procedures it followed? Here I want to look at objectivity, validity, and ethics as key issues for consideration by any researcher. I am also mindful that not all the issues are as relevant to the interpretive paradigm as they are to the positivistic paradigm, and attention is paid to what I consider relevant for the paradigm under which the research was carried out.

### **3.7.1 Objectivity**

Popper (1972: 109) refers to “knowledge in the objective sense as knowledge without a subject.” This implies that the concept of objectivity is not an easy one to test because of the involvement of the human being as a subject, no matter which paradigm is chosen. However, we can guard against subjectivity in research by developing rigorous methodological techniques.

Just like in the positivistic paradigm where knowledge cannot exist without the subject, in the interpretive paradigm, the researcher should be able to stand aside and let the data speak for itself. Can the same data be interpreted the same by another researcher working in the same paradigm? Researchers must be able to collect and analyse their data in a systematic and regular way, which is underpinned by a rationale or theory. Again the data should be handled in ways which are judged as ethical by the research community (Bassey, 1995: 3). By being critical, as well as being self-critical in the analysis of data, researchers in the interpretive paradigm can guard against being biased.

### **3.7.2 Validity and reliability**

Smaling (1993) as quoted by Dison (1998) suggests that validity refers to the absence of unsystematic and systematic errors, and to the correspondence between research actions and the results on the one hand, and the aim of the research on the other hand.

In positivism a proposition has meaning only if it can be verified empirically (Blanc, 1992). For the interpretivist, validity is evaluated using the criteria of trustworthiness which Lincoln and Guba (1985: 295-300) identified as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They define these criteria by asking questions relevant to each criterion.

### *Credibility*

How can one establish confidence in the truth of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects with which and the content in which the inquiry was carried out?

### *Transferability*

How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects?

### *Dependability*

How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects in the same (similar) context?

### *Confirmability*

How can we establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer?

In a qualitative approach the fact that that the questions posed concern the problem being studied is not enough to assess validity of the interview. In order to improve the validity of construct validity, Miles & Huberman (1994) propose the following methods:

- the use of a number of different sources of data
- the establishment of 'a chain of evidence' linking clues and evidence that confirm an observed result. This should enable any person outside the project to follow exactly how the data has directed the process, leading from the formulation of the research question to the statement of conclusions. This method will address the questions on transferability and confirmability.

Having the study verified by key actors can answer the questions of credibility and dependability.

The reliability of qualitative research depends mainly on the ability and honesty of the researcher in describing the entire research process employed, particularly in the phases which relate to condensing and analysing the collected data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **3.7.3 Ethics**

Researchers, in taking and using data from persons, should do so in ways which recognise those persons' initial ownership of the data and which respect them as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy (Bassey, 1995: 15).

From this point of view it is essential to respect the respondents and accord them with the necessary dignity they deserve as owners of the information you are using for your personal gain. It is also imperative for the researcher to inform the respondents about the confidentiality of the information they provide as well as giving a true reflection of their responses. By referring back to the goal of the research, the researcher can address the ethics of the research. Is the research doing what it aims to do? The respect for truth and democratic values can be answered by this question.

## **3. 8 Outline of my research process**

I now discuss the path of my research by looking at the research activities involved, the reasons behind choosing the paradigm, approaches and methods employed. I will also look at problems and tensions experienced during the research process.

### **3.8.1 Research interest/topic**

My research problem (topic) is “A critical investigation of the management of the standards development process of the Life Assurance Sector in Namibia”. The choice of my topic was out of interest in the area. The area of standards development is relevant to my work environment. Because of the novelty of the area in Namibia I saw a potential of enhancing my understanding by doing the research.

### **3.8.2 The chosen paradigm**

Since I am seeking to understand and explore a field, which, to the best of my knowledge, is relatively under-researched in the Southern African region, the interpretive paradigm is the most appropriate paradigm to work in. Interpretive researchers believe that only by understanding human experience at the level at which it occurs can one understand the world around one. They see the world as an emergent social process created by individuals (Bell, 1993).

As an interpretive researcher my interest is in exploring the particular meaning individuals give to events and experiences, how reality is constructed by the human mind (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). My research interest (which is an understanding of a phenomenon through the eyes of the respondents as well as through the interpretation I would give to the phenomenon) therefore guided me to the choice of an appropriate paradigm.

The reality which I expect to find is not an objective one but a subjective one. Because I had a very clear goal with my research this activity did not present itself as problematic to me.

### **3.8.3 The research approach**

My epistemological positioning as well as my research goal informed me that I needed to collect qualitative data and therefore needed to employ a qualitative approach. “Qualitative research generally takes a smaller sample, items or groups of people and look at the qualities in their existence” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 109).

### **3.8.4 Why is it a case study?**

Since this research is an attempt to describe and interpret the standards development process of a specific industry group as it was experienced by the respondents, it is best framed as a case study. According to Stake (1995: 245):

Case studies are of value in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalisability...The purpose of the case is not to represent the world, but to represent the case...

A case study is an appropriate strategy for answering research questions which ask how or why and which do not have control over the events (Robson, 1993 cited by Winegardner 2001). Gall *et al.* (1966 cited by Winegardner 2001) have attempted to classify case study by purpose, description, explanatory and evaluation, e.g. when the purpose is description as in this case, the researcher will look for constructs to organise the data and relate it to other research findings. Yin (1998) cited by Thierart *et al.* 2001: 164) warns against using everything in a descriptive case study and cautions researchers to be more selective in order to focus on answering the research questions. Yin (*Ibid.*) suggests that the single-case study is also pertinent if it can reveal a phenomenon which is not only rare but which had until now been inaccessible to the scientific community. This particular case is ideally suited to the case study approach, since it is the first of its kind, certainly in Namibia, and perhaps in the world.

### **3.8.5 Methods for collecting data**

Again, in selecting a method to employ I was guided by my research goal. What is it that I was looking for? How could I best gain an understanding of the management of the standards development process in the Life Assurance sector? Clearly I needed to speak to the people involved. A questionnaire may have provided me with responses but would not have provided me with opportunities of seeking clarity on issues. During the interviews I could probe to gain clarity and thus explain uncertainties. An area as novel as standards development, I believe, would necessarily require the use of interviews in order to further develop the responses given.

Euvrard (2000: 1) defines the interview as a way of collecting “talk”, but because talk is dynamic, it is like catching rain in a bucket. What you end up with is rainwater and not rain which is only a little like rain. I opted for a guided or focussed interview, because it would allow the respondents to talk about the topic freely and give their views in their own time while at the same guiding the process. I concur with Bell (1993) who identified one advantage of the focussed interview as being the

simplification of data analysis because I have experienced the same effect in my analysis.

### **3.8.6 The sample selection**

Since the case in question here is the Life Assurance Industry SGB, the research sample is largely self-selected because it was the first group to complete the process of standards development in Namibia. Of the twenty-five people who participated in the process I initially selected four as research participants. The co-ordinator is a natural selection since she is likely to have (or to have gained) insight into managerial implications of the process. The other three participants represented different facets of the industry (brokers, underwriters, and administration) and were selected on the basis of convenience. Ultimately I could interview only three members due to the unavailability of the fourth person.

The three members interviewed were:

1. Jeanne Davin - Project Co-ordinator a freelance consultant
2. Leon Minders - Administration Group from Sanlam Namibia
3. Harold Kamburutue - Training/Brokers Group from Metropolitan Life

Background information on the respondents.

Out of the three respondents, 2 had professional experience in Life Assurance or Long Term Insurance while the third respondent had no formal background or experience in the industry, besides being the only female respondent. Her role was of managing the project and her experience was in project management.

The respondent I referred to as R1 in the transcripts was working for Sanlam Namibia while the other I referred to as R2 was working for Metropolitan Namibia during the time I conducted interviews, almost a year after their participation in the SGB. The two respondents were both human resource managers in the companies they represented.

### **3.8.7 Reviewing the literature**

Reviewing the literature was for me a solitary experience. Finding relevant literature was a nightmare as no library in Namibia had any information on the subject. The major libraries in the country had no books on standards development at the time of writing this thesis. The literature review as far as standards development is concerned is therefore mainly based on reports by international, regional and national authorities. I fail to understand why an area as important as standards development has not attracted the interest of scholarly literature. Perhaps this can be explained by the novelty of the area or the novelty and uncertainty of the technology involved. While trying to draw links between standards management and management theory I had to rely heavily on “common-sense theory” (Basse, 1995: 57) of myself and other practitioners in the field, nationally, regionally and internationally.

### **3.8.8 Collecting data**

The main data collection method used was the interview. I used focused or guided interviews as a method for gathering my data. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998) this type of interview allows the respondents to give their views freely in their own time while the focus of the interview is being maintained at the same time. My questions focussed on how the participants experienced the process in general; whether they considered it to have been a success or not and why; what they consider as the major factors that have contributed to the completion of the process; how the process was managed, e.g. the structures that were in place and how their role/s contributed to the management of the process.

I conducted a pilot interview with one of my colleagues at work and tested the functionality of the tape recorder, but to my surprise, after I had conducted three interviews, just as I was about to start transcribing, I could hardly hear anything.

I had to find a better tape-recorder, which did an excellent job. One interviewee was not available for the second attempt and I settled on conducting three interviews instead of the originally planned four. The change did not influence the outcome of my findings as it was in harmony with my research paradigm and research goals. The data was collected systematically transcribed by myself. Transcribing posed

difficulties especially in capturing non-verbal gestures such as nodding of a head, or murmured confirmations, but I resolved to add brackets to include these non-verbal gestures.

### **3.8.9 Presenting and analysing the data**

The presentation and analysis of data are presented in separate chapters. My first task was to identify themes or categories in order to present data in a coherent and sensible way. These themes emerged from the intersection between my research interest and questions and the data itself.

The decision to present a discussion of findings separately was not an easy one to make. It seemed likely to lead to repetition and add to the length of this thesis. However, it does make for more meaningful and systematic discussion of themes that have already been clearly identified and justified.

### **3.8.10 Reflections on the research process**

Though I had a very clear picture of what I wanted to research, writing the research proposal was not very easy, perhaps because it was the first time for me.

Reviewing the literature was the most difficult task because I found nothing addressing the management of standards development; available literature focuses on the activities of standards development in detail and structures. Fortunately because I had developed a good understanding of what management is I could eventually pick out the management issues "inside" and "outside" of what I was reading. I could perhaps better explain this situation by comparing it to wine tasting. At times you have to be a *connoisseur* (expert) to be able to pick out aromas in the wine, e.g. the brandy in the wine instead of cocoa. In the same way I felt the connoisseurship I had gained in my studies of education management enabled me to identify distinctive managerial features of the standards generating process.

Collecting data posed problems when I had to stop the interview because of a ringing telephone or cellphones. I found it difficult to request the respondents not to receive calls during the interview though I felt like doing it.

Data presentation presented some problems:

The identified themes were like a cluster of one broad theme and I had to be cautious in order to avoid a lot of repetition or saying the same thing differently. I wrestled hard with the desire to disentangle the themes from each other throughout the discussion. As a result the discussion of it may appear to have been covered elsewhere. However, in an attempt to unravel significance of every theme to the case, they had to be treated as individual themes.

The next chapter presents the data in themes.

## CHAPTER 4

### Presentation of Data

A careful analysis of the data led to the identification of five themes that best describe the reflections and impressions of the respondents. In this chapter I present the data without comment or discussion. Chapter 5 presents the discussion of my findings

#### 4.1 Leadership

The general response was that the management of the SGB for the Life Assurance Sector was conducted “professionally”. The respondents all presented a positive picture of the guidance provided. Their comments suggest a sense of strong leadership on the part of the facilitator.

They unanimously regarded the SGB standards writing **facilitator** as having “managed” and “led the process “well”. On probing, they all elaborated on the qualities he possesses: he is “ knowledgeable of the subject”, he has the ability to “guide us professionally”, the ability to coordinate group work, “to see to it that we went through the process”. The respondents described the management style used throughout as having been firm but informal.

The general feeling expressed by the respondents is that their exposure to a knowledgeable facilitator served as a motivation. The style and nature of facilitation motivated them so that they “couldn’t sleep” as it was “formal but captive”. These comments indicate their eagerness in wanting to participate in the process until the end.

Visionary and facilitating leadership was also evident elsewhere in the process. One respondent (R2) noted that when his line manager received the invitation to join the SGB he suggested that he (R2) should participate, because as a “trainer” he would

benefit more. This is indicative of the visionary leadership of some line managers as far as the identification of people who were to participate in the SGB was concerned.

Respondents also noted that the activities of the SGB were characterised by the application of their vast industry knowledge in terms of analysing current and future needs; thus they knew “what we are doing and what we would like to see being done”. They noted that this way they led and managed the process as the experts in their jobs. One respondent noted that the “willingness” of the participants to work together had a positive effect on their motivation.

They all identified the leadership roles played by the different groups of participants in the process as significant factors in the success of the project. The professional body’s (LAAN) role was characterised by a sense of commitment and trust in the group. It was noted that this group had the commitment of the “controlling body”. They noted that the SGB’s functioning was characterised by “a willingness to work together” and to achieve common goals.

Two respondents noted that the participation of some of the companies’ Chief Executive Officer’s in the SGB served as a source of motivation to them, because they felt that their general occupational class concerns were receiving attention from their senior officials albeit at a different forum. In this way the different members’ concerns could be heard.

They all noted that the whole industry was fully sensitised to the process at “meetings and workshops”. They all noted that the purpose of the meetings was also to clarify the roles of participants.

All respondents noted that industries should find “expert advice” when writing standards to ensure that “training is done professionally”. Reflecting on this, I infer that the possession of appropriate knowledge is a prerequisite for effective leadership.

Two respondents observed how the management of the standards was characterised by the management of the logistics. They listed stakeholder “invitations, the sending of mails, workshops, tendering for a facilitator, requesting nominations” and soliciting

feedback amongst many other activities which needed to be coordinated. They both noted how this function was properly managed by the project leader.

Two respondents however registered a concern about the lack of clarity of the future of the standards writing in the country. While the one's concern was how the government would "enforce companies" to implement the standards, the other referred to the time it takes to get feedback from the NQA resulting in delaying the "registration of standards on the NQF". It was feared that if there were no enforcement most companies would probably do nothing. This lack of faith in the system seems to have been one of the demotivating factors in the SGB.

It was also noted that participation in the SGB was a positive experience especially upon seeing how the process worked in other countries like "Australia and New Zealand". This indicates that progress made by others served to motivate this group.

While the general view is that the SGB was highly motivated, one respondent offered a mixed picture about the attitudes of some line managers who saw the process of writing standards as a "lot of paperwork" and a "waste of time and money".

Thus the overall picture of leadership that emerges is a positive one. Leadership occurred at different levels of the SGB, and usually took the form of expert knowledge, motivation and clarity of task structure. Participants were able to engage in thinking that one would call emancipatory to be discussed in 4.2.

#### **4.2 Emancipatory Learning/thinking**

Some respondents (R1 &R2) noted the emancipatory role played by participation in the process by linking standards development to the efforts of the Affirmative Action Act. Though the concern does not come up many times it is an aspect that requires exploration owing to its importance in standards writing.

R1 suggests that the standards will "become the third pillar of our Affirmative Action Act, because that's actually the upgrading of our current people of Sanlam,

disadvantaged people that have a lot of experience but no training and ....no formal qualifications and didn't have the opportunity to qualified". This sentiments are supported by (R2) who proposed that he would like to see "the alignment" of certain qualifications to what "the industries know and what to do with their people" in order to qualify them properly.

It becomes apparent that the experience of both participants enlightened their thinking about the link between qualifications and experience of people. The concern of these respondents is how the experiences of the previously disadvantaged people of their industry can be formally recognised. And they see the standards development to possibly provide that answer.

### **4.3 Structure of the SGB**

Another strong characteristic of the group's success was the fact that it was representatives of all the relevant occupational groups from the industries, the NQA, the main public training providers such as UNAM and Polytechnic of Namibia as well as government officials from the Ministry of Finance. The motivation given by one respondent for this was "to make it a participative process" thereby making sure that they were doing the right things. The composition of this group was in line with the recommendations of the Policy of Standards setting in Namibia. Respondents noted that the industry people represented the entire Life Insurance Industry in Namibia, with representatives from Capricorn Life, Sanlam, Mutual, Swabou and Fedsure.

All respondents commented on how they were "divided into different groups like underwriters, the new business processing people". The grouping was done in terms of expertise in a job. This implies an acknowledgement of expertise and division of labour on the part of the organisers. The respondents noted that when the groups were separated they focussed better as people with expertise in their specific areas. They noted that they were under the impression that their standards were good but realised that they could still improve.

Two respondents commented how the process was managed by the different levels of the hierarchy. Once the standards were written by the SGB they were forwarded to LAAN/NSSB for comments and then to the NQA.

None of them mentioned the existence of a direct relationship with the NQA, while the relationship with the NSSB or LAAN was noted to have existed through top management.

One respondent (R2) observed that working in groups was an opportunity to carefully consider the future directions of the industry. They noted that they were engaged in a dialogue in which the future of the industry was put into perspective. This was supported by another who felt that they were able to think about how to address the problems of experienced industry people without proper qualifications through the use of standards, as in “the upgrading of current people of Sanlam, disadvantaged people that have a lot of experience but no training”.

It can be seen that the division of labour empowered the participants. While they initially thought they had good standards, training enabled them to write better standards. All respondents spoke positively about the standards they were able to write.

#### **4.4 Learning organisation/Organisation culture**

All respondents registered the fact that the standards generating process was characterised by the creation of a sound organisational culture.

Two respondents stated by means of examples how a positive working culture was established and maintained. One noted that the initial consultations were characterised by “invitations and drawing up of a schedule”. This is indicative of the existence of a management culture based on proactive principles. Another noted that the process included a wide representation of the industry implying the existence of a culture of democratic participation. All the respondents commented that including a variety of people in the process of standards generation facilitates learning and problem solving.

One respondent felt that members were able to “hear” each other; another noted that members from different companies learned from each other’s mistakes.

The respondents confirmed that a culture based on unity, equality and togetherness prevailed. They realised that they joined the group for a common purpose and saw no point in acting as rivals but developed a “sense of belonging”. They felt that mutual understanding was inculcated amongst companies that were “supposed to be competing”. It would appear that the prevalence of a positive working culture or sense of collegiality was a dominant feature of their operation.

All respondents observed the value of training in the process. This suggests the prevalence of a culture of learning and a learning organisation. They elaborated on how they were first taught or taken “through the process” by the facilitator, separated into groups and then given opportunities to discuss their group work with the whole SGB thereby giving them the opportunity to include the views of the whole group. This is indicative of a participatory approach of facilitation. They noted that in the past their training had lacked “quality” but that the training they had received resulted in the acquisition of the necessary skills and expertise to write standards of a “high quality”. They described the professional culture that prevailed in terms of training and the quality of the standards written.

It came out strongly that while the respondents noted the quality of the standards they wrote, benchmarking was seen as a central to this process. They confirmed that they based their standards on those of other countries, as in “of course they were led by the role models of New Zealand, Scotland and South Africa”. This is indicative of the existence of a culture based on quality improvement.

Top management’s involvement was seen as a strong theme in the “success” of the process. The question I posed on what they regarded as having been a contributing factor to the completion of the process drew consistent responses in favour of top management’s “support” and “commitment”. They stated that in order to ensure the support and success of the process top management should be the driving force behind the process. It becomes evident that top management support had an influence

on the working culture of this group. This implies a culture based on the ideals of organisation development (OD).

Two respondents registered the fact that consultations were conducted in an open and fair manner. An example cited was of tendering for a facilitator. This confirms the prevalence of a culture of openness, fairness and transparency.

#### **4.5 Organisational Development (OD)**

The respondents generally noted that the process was characterised by the ability to engage in a dialogue and the ability to seek the best solutions to problems encountered which are important features of OD.

##### **4.5.1 Problem solving**

The general response was that involvement in the standards generating process for the Life Assurance SGB contributed to a better understanding of problems experienced by the industry as a whole. The respondents all felt that they had an opportunity of listening to each other and to solve their problems through agreement.

The respondents commented that although they experienced difficulties when the process commenced participation in the group discussions proved that they could all learn from each other. Apparently the impression given by some members was that they were of a superior status (presumably they represented more powerful companies). However, effective group participation and joint problem solving gradually eroded this sense elitism.

Some respondents felt that when they started, different opinions prevailed on the type of standards to be written. Members representing smaller companies such as Metropolitan Life and Capricorn Life felt that their needs were in writing “funeral covers only” while members representing larger companies such as Sanlam Life, Mutual Namibia and Fedsure felt that their need was more in writing standards for

recommending “policies and pension funds to big companies”. The respondents revealed that such a debate resulted in the categorisation of the standards into different levels based on the complexities required to perform the job. If a job required no formal skills and could be performed by anyone, then it was agreed that such a standard be placed at level one of the Framework. However if the job required more skills and expertise then it was agreed to place it at a much higher level such as level four or level five. Literature on NQF systems contests that such an arrangement is done in terms of the level descriptors which describe the competencies required at any given levels of the qualifications framework.

Two respondents felt that through the establishment of a network more input into the standards was received leading to a faster way of solving problems. They noted how each person in the SGB had to find 5 experts in the job concerned, who would comment on the standards. This implies that the standards written by only 25 SGB members had input from almost every industry expert.

What is revealed is that through developing the standards the SGB was exposed to multiple ways of solving problems, because as noted by one respondent “a problem is not a problem if it works for you”. This implies that while you may see a problem in something, someone who has been through it will be in a position to give advice. The likelihood that most problems had solutions was great because many people have different perceptions and approaches to problem solving.

#### **4.5.2 Communication**

The general response from all respondents was that communication played an important role in the process of generating standards. They all referred to the different means of communication which included “mails” and “workshops”. One respondent noted that the provision of mailing addresses during the first week of the meetings kept all participants informed. It was observed that those people who were not in possession of email addresses were contacted through the postal system.

One respondent (R3) who had been elected “project leader” felt that the roles of all the members were clearly communicated at various forums. A meeting held with the “MD’s” also served the purpose of communicating the roles of various people and to “ask them to give their co-operation ... and to give their consent on the process”. One respondent noted how at every stage of the process, information was shared. He cited an example of how after participation in group work, they were reassembled into the SGB to share experiences of identifying “good from bad standards”. This reveals that the SGB was fully informed about what was happening in the different groups. One respondent (R1) felt that they were guided professionally during the sessions. He explained in detail how all the stakeholders were invited to workshops and also how the objectives of the workshops were clarified and communicated. Another respondent (R3) highlighted the role of communication with the outside world. An example of how they modelled the other countries such as New Zealand, Scotland and South Africa was given.

Respondents explained how communication with the larger industry was ensured through the establishment of a network of 5 experts per participant (as discussed above under problem solving) indicating an extension of communication to a further 100 people who did not directly participate in the process. One respondent (R3) commented on how progress made by the SGB group was well communicated to NSSB members and LAAN. The only obstacle to communication reported by respondents was the delayed feedback from the NSSB and the NQA. It was reported to be the “biggest frustration”. This again point to a broader system error, rather than a problem in group functioning.

Another respondent noted that participation in the SGB enhanced communication between members of one industry as well as members within one company operating at different hierarchical levels. It revealed that an opportunity for people “to hear each other” was created.

Most respondents noted the importance of linking one’s communication strategy to time management. One cited the example of the schedule they had to work to, while another suggested that he would like to see “2003-2004 a year in which government would communicate its intentions in aligning industry standards to qualifications”.

One respondent felt that getting the commitment and “buy-in” of the leaders was essential implying that the best way of ensuring this commitment and to “sell the process to the people” must be through communication.

Thus effective communication, both within the group and between the groups and outside bodies, emerges as a key factor in the successful functioning of the group.

#### **4.6 Collegiality/teamwork**

All respondents noted that the participation in the SGB was characterised by the development of good interpersonal relations. One respondent explained how the uncertainty which prevailed at the beginning of the process culminated in “friendship” relations at the end because people who in “past” limited conversations to greetings were now able to have “conversations”. The same respondent noted that the development of the collegiality “contributed massively to success of the process” chiefly because communication became more relaxed and open.

Another respondent felt that members of this SGB learnt a lot from each other through listening to how members in other companies were addressing common problems. They noted that a team spirit was developed as they started thinking and operating in terms of industry’s needs. This reveals a team that was free to share knowledge implying a sense of oneness and communalism. One respondent compared the team spirit of the SGB with the “Comoros islands” which are many small island put together to form one country. Different companies were put together to form one industry. The result was prioritised industry needs as opposed to company needs. He noted that they developed a sense of belonging to the SGB.

The respondents noted how of every member to the SGB was appreciated as they realised that even larger companies could learn from each other and from smaller companies, resulting in the realisation that they were “equals” thereby preventing the representatives of smaller companies being absorbed by the larger ones. One respondent noted that the realisation that the standards they were writing would not

belong to any particular company contributed to improved human relations. Some respondents felt that the Life Insurance Industry is a “close little family” and that the people working for the same occupation knew each other through their “IPM”. However the friendship circle was expanded to other occupational areas.

# CHAPTER 5

## Discussion of Findings

In this chapter I attempt to discuss my chief findings in terms of dominant theories of leadership, management and organisation development. The findings will be discussed in the themes identified in chapter 4.

### 5.1 Leadership

The data reveals the importance of effective leadership characterised by vision crafting, change management, motivation, goal-setting, taking the initiative, expert knowledge and effective delegation. The leadership of all the insurance companies took it upon themselves to get involved in the process of setting standards, after consultation with their counterparts in neighbouring South Africa.

#### 5.1.1 Leadership and management

Since it seems unavoidable for me to include leadership as an aspect of the management of the project, I need to explore the extent to which leadership and management are inextricably linked to each other. The literature strongly suggests that, while significant differences exist between management and leadership, research has frequently ignored these differences, so that many 'management' theories apply equally to 'leadership'. Van der Mescht (1996) is of the view that leadership and management are not mutually exclusive. He asserts that we cannot talk about one without making reference to the other.

Kotter (cited in French & Bell, 1999) draws a distinction between the two concepts:

management involves "planning and organising" and "controlling and problem solving". In contrast, leadership involves "establishing direction, including developing a vision and strategies for getting there; "aligning

people”, including communication of the desired direction and securing cooperation; and “motivating and inspiring” which he asserts requires an appeal to the very basic, but often untapped, human needs, values and emotions.

For organisations to be successful, he asserts, both leadership and management are essential. It was evident in my research that the two could not be separated. A good definition of management describing this close link is provided by Fayol, cited by Novis (2000: 5) in a Future Focus Management Program Manual presented in Windhoek.

To manage is to project and plan, to organize, to direct and to control. To project and provide for the necessary materials means to build a future pattern and draw up a plan of action. To organise, means to build up the two structures of the organisation namely, material and men. To direct means to ensure the staff’s performance continues, they cooperate and to ensure that all activities and efforts are coordinated and work in unison. To control means to see to it that everything is done in accordance with the laid down rules and orders given.

The above definition further strengthens the link between management and leadership, particularly in its future-orientation.

### **5.1.2 Motivation**

One of the leadership and management functions which is evident in the data is motivation. Data confirms that the SGB members experienced a great sense of motivation to the extent that they “*couldn’t sleep*”. Eade (1996) argues that the single most important technique for motivating the people you supervise is to treat them as responsible and professionals. She extols the qualities that lead to motivational management as being the following:

plan, teach, delegate not dump, encourage independent thinking, build a team, listen, set an example, accept responsibility and share the spotlight (Eade, 1996: 3)

Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999) argue that motivation is a force that energises and gives direction to behaviour. People also do their best when they believe they will be treated fairly. They define it as a direction and persistence of individual behaviour or

action. The specific SGB behaved the way they did because they knew why they were involved in the whole undertaking. They also experienced a sense of being equals.

Motivation has been extensively discussed and analysed by researchers in psychology and management. Three of the best-known theories are those by Maslow, Herzberg and Maclelland. Maslow's (1987) theory of motivation suggests that individuals are first motivated by higher needs once the lower order needs have been satisfied to an acceptable level. According to this theory, a satisfied need no longer motivates behaviour. Therefore as soon as the physiological needs have been satisfied the individual is motivated by the security needs. This corresponds with Herzberg's two-factor theory (cited by George & Singh, 2000) which postulates that the hygiene factors play no role in motivation and that it is the presence of the motivating factors which leads to job satisfaction.

Maslow's lower-order (physiological, security & social) needs can be linked to Herzberg's hygiene factors (company policy, salaries, working conditions and supervision) while his motivating factors (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement) can be compared to Maslow's the higher-order needs (esteem and self-actualisation). It can be argued that the specific SGB was motivated by the need for self-actualisation in terms of Maslow's theory or the need for recognition, achievement in terms of Herzberg's theory. This is evident in the respondents' references to their levels of excitement, their commitment to the task and to each other, and their sense of satisfaction in having produced such excellent standards.

According to Smit & Cronje (1997) the kind of motivation that is characterised by the need for achievement reflects McClelland's achievement theory which asserts that different needs drive different people. This theory identifies three needs: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation and the need for power. While the findings clearly imply the existence of the first two, there is no evidence that suggests the presence of the last one. This may well be an example of where theories devised in Western cultures do not adequately explain behaviour in different cultural settings. The strong sense of group and team work suggested by my data seems to argue against the notion of power-seeking. It seems clear to me that individual members set

aside their need for power: the bigger companies, for example, were prepared to learn from smaller ones in the interest of group success. What was important was that good standards were developed for Namibia, not for individuals or individual companies. Thus the notion of a communal goal-directness, the backbone of the *ubuntu* philosophy, was more evident than power-seeking.

Whether the motive is power or group success, it seems clear that goal setting is an important aspect of motivation. McShane & Von Glinow (2000) define goal-setting as the process of motivating employees and clarifying their role perceptions by establishing performance objectives. They also noted that:

goal setting potentially improves employee performance in two ways, (1) by stretching the intensity and persistence of effort and (2) by giving employees clearer role perceptions so that their effort is channelled toward behaviours that will improve work performance (McShane & Von Glinow, 2000: 82).

Clarity of role perceptions emerged as a strong theme in my data.

### **5.1.3 Transformational leadership**

It can be argued that signs of transformational leadership were clearly visible in the SGB. On the one hand it is difficult to speak of the leaders in the group since the data suggests that everyone was a leader; but on the other hand specific individuals, such as the facilitator, did emerge as leaders. Since the leadership exhibited was not linked to position or seniority, and in light of the extraordinary functioning of the group, I would typify the leadership as transformational.

According to Burns (cited by Starratt, 1993: 8):

transformational leadership encourages followers to function at a higher level, transcending their more self-serving motives for the achievement of some higher common good.

Evidence from the data suggests that members of the SGB were transformed in their way of thinking about each other, about work in general and about their industry. As

mentioned earlier, they were able to transcend their individual company's interest for achieving higher industry interests. This is in line with Burns' suggestion that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with each other in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. It is also consistent with De Cenzo & Robbins' (2001: 407) understanding:

Transformational leaders pay attention to the concerns and developmental needs of individual followers, they change followers' awareness of issues by helping those followers to look at old problems in new ways; and they are able to excite, arouse and inspire followers to put in extra effort to achieve group goals.

They suggest that transformational leadership should not be seen as opposing transactional leadership as transformational leadership is built on transactional leadership. However transformational leadership produces levels of employee effort and performance that go beyond what would occur in with a transactional approach alone and more than charismatic leadership. This tendency in the case I studied has been alluded to. In hindsight I realise that I could have probed this issue more deeply, but I was perhaps too narrowly focused on 'management' to be alert to how transformational leadership might have played itself out in the process.

## **5.2 Emancipatory learning/thinking**

As indicated in my presentation of data in 4.2 this theme, albeit only coming up a few times, is regarded as a very important one by the researcher because it reflects a critical, reflective way of thinking about the value of standards development, something which so far has not been reflected directly in literature on standards writing. Boyce (1997) suggests that a critically conscious person recognises connections between individual problems and the social context within which they are embedded.

In an article on Emancipatory Learning, Thompson (2000: 1) suggests that the purpose of emancipatory learning is to develop understanding and knowledge about the nature and root causes of unsatisfactory circumstances in order to develop real

strategies to change them. Citing the experiences of Britain in which there is a widening divide between those who are highly educated, skilled and well paid and those who are skilled and poorly educated and poorly educated, she suggests that adults have a choice to make: if they do not take the side of the poor and powerless, then, by default, they contribute to preserving the status quo on the side of the rich and privileged. For those who want to contribute to creating a more informed, egalitarian and socially just society, the ideas and practices associated with emancipatory learning may be a place to start.

In support of the experiences in Britain, the National Human Resource Report (2000-2006: 23) in Namibia confirms that:

It is seen that the Namibian labour force is atypical as compared with other countries. The total number of employed with further education is low, some 10% and persons with only primary education or less accounts for almost 60% of the total gainfully employed labour force.

This gives a clear indication that a large number of the Namibian workforce relies heavily on skilled, unqualified workforce.

In view of these observations, I believe that we can trace the origins of the concerns of especially (R1) with the notion of “the current people of SANLAM, disadvantaged people that have a lot of experience” but “no formal qualifications” back to the realities on the ground.

The NQF in South Africa and Namibia is unique in the sense that it is seen as a vehicle to redress the past injustices of the Apartheid system, hence the observed link to the Affirmative Action Act by (R1). These observations made a great impact on me in that the respondents were able to examine the standards setting process more deeply and relate it to what appears to me to be a unique way of thinking.

This view is supported by Joubert (1992) cited by Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999: 155) who says:

If we see Affirmative Action merely as the replacement of white labour with black labour to redress inequality and injustices we have no chance

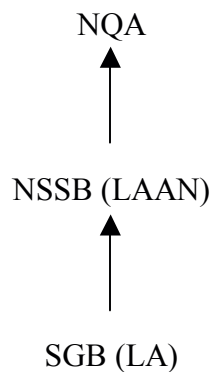
of improving South Africa's competitiveness. If, however, we assess South Africa's skills profile in the context of leading developing and even developed countries of the world and determine what must be done at an international, national, organisation and individual level to improve our skills base, we will be on the road to improvement and success.

The above statements have in my opinion captured the concerns of the respondents in terms of the link between affirmative action and standards development as a way of recognising the skills levels of the people in the LA industry. The question posed by R1 indirectly is: How can we recognise the skills of the people in the Insurance Industry? What industry efforts can complement the implementation of Affirmative Action in the Insurance industry?

Boyce (1996) asserts that there is no emancipation without context or accountability. She further suggests that a commitment to democracy requires social critique and transformation of social, political and organizational structures. The respondents are emancipated or liberated in their thinking in the context of developing standards for the LA industry. Citing Freire (1972) Boyce (1997) suggests that education liberates when it challenges dominant ideology and teaches critical literacy. This notion can be linked to Thompson (2000: 2) who asserts that critical thinking assumes that people whatever their intelligence or ability must engage in the wider world if they are to survive in it and help to reconstitute it.

### **5.3 Structure**

It is evident that the structure of the standards generating process for the LA industry was underpinned by bureaucratic principles of management, for example division of labour and centralised authority. The following illustration demonstrates that the SGB was at the lowest level of the structure, and that they would report to the NSSB, which in turn would report to the NQA:



This indicates a clear hierarchy and division of labour. This arrangement is stipulated in the policy of standards setting in Namibia which has been described in the literature chapter. Structure refers to the overall design of the organization, that is how the parts are connected to produce the whole. It also refers to how individual work tasks are designed and how these tasks are integrated in a coherent manner (French & Bell, 1999). In addition, French & Bell suggest that certain structures promote responsibility and innovation; getting the structures right produces immediate, substantial improvements in performance.

The NSSB, in this case LAAN, took the decision to get involved in standards writing, implying that “centralised authority” modelled by a bureaucratic model of organisational design and the SGB was “subjected to specific rules, policy and procedures” (Smit & Cronje 1997: 211). According to the same authors (1993: 211) Max Weber’s ideal bureaucracy postulates that “the most efficient enterprises have a hierarchical structure based on a legitimate and formal system of authority”. The case under discussion confirms that when their tasks were defined and clearly understood by the members, improved knowledge was fostered. Overall data confirms that the standards written were of a high quality due to the expertise acquired through their involvement in the subgroups.

Selection to the SGB was based on the expertise in the jobs and that again confirms the influence of the bureaucratic model, as in employment on the strength of expertise. Hoy & Miskel (1996) argue that division of labour and specialisation are essential aspects of management resulting in effectiveness.

It was not able to establish whether the SGB experienced any of the disadvantages of a bureaucratic model, such as rigidity, and ignorance of human relations and social processes. However, based on their reflections on collegiality, assumptions can be made that they did not.

It seems contradictory to suggest that transformational leadership – a highly personalised and person-centred phenomenon – could exist within bureaucratic structures, and perhaps this question needs to be debated. One wonders how the kinds of interpersonal dynamics, such as effective teamwork and high degrees of collegiality as revealed in my data, arose and flourished within a system that is traditionally characterised by impersonal relations and red-tape procedures. One of the answers may well lie in the tendency to interpret any particular model or theory too narrowly. Does it follow, for example, that bureaucratic structuring is always characterised by impersonal relations? This research suggests not. Further, is it not perhaps true that any organisation at some point will need careful role division and clarity of reporting procedures? My research suggests that this is so. This makes it possible for one to recognise highly person-oriented features – such as transformational leadership – existing within (or perhaps beyond) formal regulatory procedures associated with bureaucracy. Another approach to this question is to consider the role played by organisation culture.

Robbins & De Cenzo (2001) argue that organisational culture may have an effect on an organisation's structure, depending on how strong or weak the culture is. They suggest that if an organisation's culture is strong and characterised by issues such as predictability, orderliness and consistency, without the need for written documentation, then managers would not need to be concerned with developing formal rules and regulations. However if an organisation's culture is weak, with no existence of dominant shared values, then it will have no effect on the clarity of the structure. Evidence from the data suggests that there was clarity on how the structures functioned. The organisational culture reflected by the SGB will be discussed below in section 5.3.

Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999: 45-46) provide another view on synthesising the person/structure orientations in organisations:

structure and policies within the organisation must be such that they will not only promote achievement goals of the organisation but enhance the achievement of individual goals within the framework of the psychological contract goals of the organisation.

It can also be argued that features reflecting the structural management model as proposed by Bolman & Deal (1994: 77-94) existed. The authors suggest four frameworks determined by circumstances based on appropriateness. A manager using the structural approach will design a structure appropriate to the circumstances which include:

- clarifying organisational goals
- managing the external environment
- developing a clear structure appropriate to the task
- clarifying lines of authority
- focus on task, facts, logic and not personality and emotions.

They further argue that this approach is useful when information is clear, under a stable legitimate authority.

#### **5.4 The Learning organisation/organisational culture**

The question of organisation culture, referred to above, emerged as central theme in my findings. There is evidence suggesting the development of a culture characterised by positive life principles such as openness, transparency, democracy, timeliness, team spirit, shared vision, quality, and learning, just to mention the most prevalent features. Data indicates that the SGB under discussion experienced most of the above-mentioned principles.

In this section I attempt to explain the concept, and suggest how it manifests itself in the data.

McShane & Von Glinow (2000: 505) postulate that organisational culture is the basic pattern of shared assumptions, values and beliefs considered to be the correct way of

thinking about and acting on problems and opportunities. They suggest that organisational culture is a deeply embedded form of social control that influences employee decisions and behaviour. Culture, they suggest, is pervasive and operates unconsciously. It binds people together and makes them feel part of the organisational experience and it also helps people understand the organisational events. Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999: 13) define it as the manner in which things are done in the organisation, the general assumptions about how work should be done. It is also known as the “personality of the organisation”.

The notion finds resonance in Williams (2000: 64) who suggests that organisational culture is the “set of key values, beliefs and attitudes shared by organizational members”. Organisational cultures, he confirms, are created by company founders. He asserts that organisational culture based on adaptability, involvement, a clear mission and consistency is related to organisational success. It appears that the SGB established a culture of its own, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Robbins & De Cenzo (2001: 220) also believe that an organisation’s culture reflects the vision or mission of the organisation’s founders. Because the founders have the original idea they also have biases on how to carry out the ideas. They also argue that the organisation’s culture results from the interaction between “the founders’ biases and assumptions and what the first employees learn subsequently from their own experiences” (2001: 220). This sentiment is echoed by Schein (1997) cited by Smith & Taylor (2000: 196) who contended that:

it is the leaders who determines the acceptable behaviour and if the leaders of today want to create organisational cultures that will themselves be more amenable to learning they will have to set the example by becoming learners themselves and involving others in the learning process.

However, it cannot be said that top managers’ biases were directly reflected in the SGB, nor can it be said that they contributed to the developed culture. This observation can be linked to what I postulated when discussing leadership. It could not be established from the data whether the top managers of the different companies who participated in the SGB played any leadership role. What could be established,

though, was that the facilitator of the group process played a determining role in the SGB's functioning, and this is really the key issue since it is the operation of the SGB that is the focus of this study.

Based on the picture from the data I would argue that the culture was open, fair and transparent. There was no evidence to suggest that some members were discriminated against in any possible way. None reported the existence of hostility. While election to the SGB may not have been democratic (as members were chosen by their line managers) the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the SGB as well as the manner in which consensus was reached arguably provides evidence of the prevalence of a democracy.

In the previous chapter I noted the recurrence of shared vision as a theme characterising the SGB and I would like here to draw attention to Senge (1990), who holds that when there is a shared vision, old ways of thinking are discarded and all organisational processes are regarded as part of interrelationships. Communication becomes completely open and personal self-interest is sublimated in favour of a common goal.

The top managers provided the impetus for the learning organisation within the SGB by being part of the learning themselves, but nothing suggests that they influenced the culture or not. It could be argued that the SGB maintained the culture through group learning and participation. Covey (1989) reminds us that the basic role of a leader is to foster mutual respect and build a complementary team where each one's strength is made productive and each weakness made irrelevant. This may help to explain what happened in the SGB under consideration. A similar sentiment is expressed by Reynolds & Ablett (1998) who contest that the importance of learning and knowledge is generally accepted to be of significance among management theorists. This can be seen as an attempt to make learning and knowledge an inextricable function of management.

The SGB members learnt indiscriminately from one another regardless of the positions they held at company level, reminding me of a famous saying in my own ethnic language, Otjiherero: *Maharero wa kaniningirire ondungo ku Ketjimambo*

(Maharero went to ask for a needle from Ketjimambo). The saying implies that one's positional authority does not make one superior in any respect.

Underpinning such a discussion is Nonaka's (1991) notion (cited by Smith & Taylor 2000: 196) which suggests that:

...“knowledge creating company” asserts that the value of any one person's contribution is determined less by his or her location in the organisation hierarchy than by the importance of the knowledge he or she provides to the entire knowledge-creating system.

This correlates with Tjepkema & Wognum's (1996) view (cited in Reynolds and Ablett 1998: 26) which holds that in order to learn, a learning organisation makes use of all employees, therefore striving to create a “work environment which stimulates and supports learning”. The data constantly refers to South Africa, New Zealand, Scotland and Australia implying the importance placed on learning from others. Benchmarking, the need to be globally competitive and team involvement were seen as inherent characteristics of the SGB. According to Dorsch & Yasin (1998) a managerial philosophy which embodies the “learn from others approach” is referred to as benchmarking. They advocate that benchmarking efforts are geared towards the identification of operational and strategic gaps and the search for best practices that would eliminate the gaps thereby improving service quality.

## **5.5 Organisation development**

The research data provide evidence that the SGB was characterised by issues such as problem-solving, communication, visioning and empowerment which are the essence of Organisation Development (OD), making this case a classical example of OD.

French & Bell (1999: 25-26) define OD as:

A long term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve the organization's visioning, empowerment, learning, and problem-solving processes, through an ongoing, collaborative management of organization culture.

George & Singh (2000: 222) summarised Richard Beckhardt's definition as:

... an effort i) planned, ii)organisation-wide, and iii)managed from the top, iv) to increase organisational effectiveness and health, through v)planned interventions in the organisation's processes using behavioural science knowledge.

Both definitions capture the essential properties of OD and place considerable weight on the processes that characterised the standards development process of the LA industry. The view that the process has been led and supported by top management has been overstated and exhausted in my writing in an attempt to describe the different chosen themes.

Data provide enough credence to the fact that the SGB was characterised by problem-solving processes as indicated by the way they attempted to unravel their differences through open debates leading to consensual agreements. French & Bell (1999: 4) suggest that important OD processes include communication, problem solving and decision making, while Schmuck & Runkel (1994: 229) advocate that problem solving is the "heart of OD". Based on the findings it can be derived that problem solving was a central activity to the functioning of the SGB. It can be seen that participation in the SGB offered an opportunity to seek and predict solutions for problems that the industry was likely to experience in future through a visioning process.

Through the establishment of a network within the larger industry the SGB was exposed to a wide range of problem-solving techniques such as data gathering, which is regarded as a crucial stage of problem solving by most literature on problem solving. It is a notable fact that the data highlight the role played by communication as they pertain to issues such as the timely dissemination of information, the purpose or "objectives" of the different meetings and workshops and training. It can be inferred that the SGB served as a platform for cross-fertilisation of information between members of different companies.

Gerber, Nel &Van Dyk (1999) suggest that communication is a key ingredient for preparing organisations to be responsive to changing conditions and to learn more

effective ways of producing results. By sharing information and fostering open communication throughout the group, leaders make others feel more included in the work environment and hence receive valuable feedback. Jones (1997) argues that in order to work together successfully, everyone must be kept informed and made to feel like equal partners. Evidence confirms that the SGB was kept informed about the progress of activities by the project leader through the different means of communication.

Smit & Cronje (1997) highlight the six components of communication, namely: process, people, transmission, receipt, the message and feedback. Evidence suggests that the only limiting factor in this case was getting feedback from the NSSB and the NQA.

Robbins & De Cenzo (2001: 280) confirm that any organisational activity that assists with “implementing planned change” can be viewed as an OD technique. They further suggest that the more popular OD efforts rely heavily on group interactions and cooperation. These efforts they highlight as being process consultation, team building, survey feedback and inter-group development. The SGB portrayed aspects of the above listed OD features.

## **5.6 Collegiality/teamwork**

There is strong evidence that the research findings are centred on the concept of collegiality or teamwork.

The SGB brought together multiple industry stakeholders with diverse backgrounds. It appears that different people joined the SGB with different expectations and prejudices, which were soon transformed. They started seeing their industry as “one country” made up of “small islands”, “like the Comoros”. There is no evidence that an external force was responsible for creating this collegiality; rather, the “collegiality comes from within”, which is how Sergiovanni (1994: 4) describes what happens in learning communities. Sergiovanni’s community metaphor becomes most appropriate

here, as it seems to capture what happened in the SGB. Sergiovanni (1994: 5) refers to three forms of community:

Community of kinship which emerges from the special kinds of relationships among people that create a unity of being similar to that found in families and other closely knit collections of people. Community of place emerges from the sharing a common habitat or locale. This sharing of place with others for sustained periods of time creates a special identity and a shared sense of belonging. Community of mind emerges from the binding of people to common goals, shared values and shared conceptions of being and doing.

Clearly the third model of community is applicable in this case. The notion also finds resonance in collegial theories proposed by Bush (1996: 54-55) which are based on the following assumptions:

- Firstly, a “normative” orientation, which reflects the view that management ought to be based on agreement and that decision making should be present.
- Secondly the importance of “authority of expertise” in contrast to positional authority.
- Thirdly, a “common set of values shared by members “ should be present.
- Fourthly, the importance of the “size” of the group and “formal representation”.
- Fifthly the importance of decisions reached by “consensus”.

The five central features of collegial theories as defined by Bush are strongly reflected by the SGB.

Collegiality has in fact become more than merely a desired characteristic of group functioning. In an article published in the USA recently, Connell & Savage (2001) point out that collegiality as a criterion for evaluating the performance of academics in US universities is receiving consistent support from the courts. When academics sue the institutions for evaluating their tenure based on collegiality, courts consistently rule in favour of the institutions arguing that collegiality is inherent in

other criteria used for evaluating university staff such as teaching service and research. Connell & Savage (2001: 2) argue that:

members don't operate in isolation from their departmental colleagues or from those in related disciplines. They must make decisions as a group regarding the curriculum, the scheduling and teaching of classes, the advising of students, and the allocation of resources and space. These responsibilities require cooperation and collegial interaction.

Though the authors here make reference to university professors, what they say can be applied to teamwork in other spheres of life. My data confirms that the responsibilities bestowed upon this SGB required collegial working relationship. It appears that they were more committed to the vision when they knew the importance of their roles. When they knew why their assignments were important they had a greater sense of responsibility. This was regarded as the first step in motivating the SGB.

Another positive outcome of teamwork is in fostering good relations. Belbin (1993) advocates that teams are important in management because of their potential to enhance the quality of decision-making and relationships. This notion ties in with Mbigi & Maree (1995: 88) exposition of the management principles of *ubuntu*, which postulate that "collective co-operation of all stakeholders in the enterprising community is an acknowledgement of the interdependence of people". The notion is also taken up by Khoza (1994) who suggests that an organisation is a community built on interpersonal relationships and group interactions held together by a feeling of security and harmony on the parts of all its members.

There is, as has been pointed out, sufficient evidence to suggest the SGB regarded the process to be a whole industry process and not belonging to certain companies or individuals. This points to the extent to which the group adopted *ubuntu* principles, and dedicated themselves to the team or group. This notion has strong support in the literature. Wysochi, Beck & Crane (1995) remind us that we have to escape the notion that an individual is "singly responsible for the success or failure" of the organisation. Eade (1996) suggests that decisions that incorporate the ideas of a group of people are vastly superior to the single viewpoint of one person imposed of the rest of the group. Williams (2000: 502) noted that a work team consists of:

a small number of people with complementary skills who hold themselves mutually accountable for pursuing a common purpose, achieving performance goals, and improving interdependent work processes.

In terms of key points raised in the literature, the SGB group can indeed be classified as a work team par excellence.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

It can be noted that the themes discussed above are extremely interrelated and at times it was difficult to separate them in the discussion. At times there was a tendency for a theme to become a significant item under a different theme, for example discussing communication would result in highlighting aspects of collegiality and vice versa. While this has made reporting and discussion difficult, I felt it necessary to adopt this route in order to present a clear picture to the reader.

As is evident from what has been discussed in this chapter, many of the characteristics exhibited by the SGB find resonance in the management, leadership and organisation literature. On occasions when a lack of fit became evident it had to be borne in mind that the SGB could not be considered to be a 'normal' organisation. It was convened for a specific purpose; it completed its work and was disbanded. The extent to which it functioned successfully as a group or team, and the principles which guided this functioning remain the focus of this study.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary of findings

The increasing trend towards the development of education and training standards in many countries in the SADC region and beyond will indirectly compel the people concerned to carefully consider the significance of its management. Perhaps the most remarkable development in education and training in post-independence Namibia was the development and management of the NQF. At first glance the management of standards may seem obvious and generic but careful scrutiny reveals that those who are interested in developing education and training standards may benefit from an understanding of the management issues contributing to the completion of such a process.

As a case study the intention of the research was to understand the management factors that contributed to the completion of this single case. It is therefore not the intention of the researcher to generalise or extend her findings to other cases of a similar or related nature.

The research is to the best of my knowledge the first of its kind in the sense that it exposes the relationship between management thinking and the management of education and training standards development process. Undertaking the research journey provided me with an opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding in managing standards development. It further broadened my understanding of national qualifications frameworks in general and the considerations for implementing them in African countries in general especially in terms of funding the bodies responsible for their development.

Countries such as New Zealand and the UK have separate budgets for standards setting activities usually funded under separate authorities. In New Zealand, Skills

New Zealand is responsible for funding the Industry Training Organisations (ITO) and in the UK; the Department of Labour takes this responsibility.

The study highlighted five main management factors that were regarded to have contributed to the completion of the standards development process. The research examined the management of the standards development process for the Life Assurance industry in Namibia. Drawing on the research findings, the following conclusions can be derived.

Firstly, the findings confirmed that leadership and management were closely linked and an attempt to separate them would be futile. Interestingly, transformational leadership as implied by Burns dominated the leadership style that prevailed. While Bass (1997) argues that transformational leadership is universally applicable and he proposes that regardless of culture transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the group and followers become motivated to expend to greater heights than would normally be expected, a study by Carless (1998) on 345 metropolitan branch managers found self-ratings by female managers to indicate that they perceived themselves to use transformational leadership than male managers.

It can be concluded that the findings correlate with Bass's (1997) argument as proof suggests that members of the SGB were transformed in their way of thinking about each other, about work in general and about their industry. They were able to transcend their individual company's interest for achieving higher industry interests.

Like transformational leaders the leaders transformed the followers into self-empowered leaders. The traits of a transformational leader, i.e. the four I's, *Idealized Influence* (leader becomes a role model), *Inspirational Motivation* (team spirit, motivate, and provide meaning and challenge), *Intellectual Stimulation* (creativity and innovation) and *Individual Consideration* (mentoring) were visibly in the group (Boje, 2000: no page number).

The findings confirmed that the SGB members experienced a great sense of motivation to such an effect that they "couldn't sleep". Eade (1996) contemplates that

the most single important technique for motivating the people you supervise is to treat them as responsible and professionals while Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk (1999) argue that motivation is a force that energises and gives direction to behaviour. People do their best when they believe they will be treated fairly.

It can also be concluded that the provision of direction through training has been a key sub-theme in the data implying that leadership is about knowledge and expertise. Training in this SGB provided the necessary direction and understanding of the process in general. The leaders provided the direction, created a vision and gave expert guidance to the SGB.

**Secondly**, it appears that the manner in which the SGB was organised was a central feature to their functioning. Great emphasis is placed on the type of structure or organisation of the group during the process. Aspects of bureaucratic management principles such as division of labour were clearly visible. This kind of arrangement facilitated the process as participants had clear role clarifications. What was remarkable is the fact that authority was centralised in the NSSB/LAAN. LAAN as the controlling body of the Insurance industry in Namibia took the decision to involve the industry in the standards development exercise and in turn ensured everyone's involvement.

**Thirdly**, the findings put strong emphasis on the concept of an organisation culture and a learning organisation. Culture in this sense could be perceived as a less visible but no less powerful form of organising to achieve a goal than structuring. The culture of this group was characterised by openness, fairness and justice. There is no data to suggest that some members were discriminated against in any possible way. None reported the existence of hostility. The findings provide evidence that participation in the SGB was not democratic as they were chosen by their line managers to be part of the SGB. However the involvement of a multiple stakeholders in the SGB as well as the manner how consensus was reached arguably provides evidence of the prevalence of a democracy.

Given the picture on the prevalence of shared vision as a theme characterising the SGB it can be concluded in support of Senge (1990), who suggests that when there is a "shared vision, old ways of thinking are discarded and all organisational processes

are regarded as part of interrelationships”. Communication becomes completely open and personal self-interest is sublimated in favour of a common goal.

**Fourthly**, the findings indicate the importance of OD in the case. OD processes were characterised by problem solving, communication, visioning, and empowerment which are the essence of Organisational Development (OD), making this case a classical example of OD.

The way SGB attempted to unravel their differences through open debates leading to consensual agreements is proof of the fact that problem solving was a central activity to the functioning of the SGB.

It can be concluded that participation in the SGB offered an opportunity to seek and predict solutions for problems that the industry was likely to experience in future through a visioning process.

**Fifthly** and lastly the findings concluded that features of collegiality were present. The SGB brought together multiple industry stakeholders with diverse backgrounds. It appears that different people joined the SGB with different expectations and prejudices, which were soon transformed.

## **6.2 Areas of concern**

It is worth reporting two concerns emerging from the data, chiefly in the interests of this work possibly providing guidance for other similar projects.

Firstly, members were concerned about the way forward, thereby implying a lack of proper guidelines from the responsible authorities. Questions such as how the NQA would compel companies to use the standards and what would happen to those companies who did not want to comply were raised. There was also concern about how the other SGB’s which form part of the same NSSB (e.g. the Short term Insurance or Banking) would affect the implementation of standards.

Another concern raised was the delayed feedback from key role players. After the standards were developed the draft standards were sent to key role players for feedback but this process took a long time. This can imply that the role players lacked the necessary skills to comment or they did not regard it as a responsibility or perhaps an urgent matter.

### **6.3 Limitations of the research**

As reported elsewhere in the thesis this case is unique in the sense that it is the first of its kind. It is a small case study and more cases would naturally provide a more comprehensive understanding of the management of standards in general. Ultimately, what was discovered speaks more generally to groups who come together for a specific task, regardless of context.

The fact that I could interview only three of the people involved is a possible limitation. In light of my findings, I would suggest that a bigger sample may well have given me more data, but perhaps not much in the way of “new” data. This is largely as result of the extent to which the members had become a single group in pursuit of a goal.

This study being the first of its kind poses difficulties in that the findings could not be related or compared to any other existing study. I would have been interested in what other similar or related studies found. Are the issues highlighted by the study essential for managing standards development in general? The lack of literature on related studies as a source of reference was problematic for me. Hopefully my own study can serve as an example for other to refer to.

### **6.4 Potential value of the study and areas for future research**

This study has the potential of becoming a stepping stone for future research in the area of managing national standards development. On a practical note, people in other industries wanting to develop standards for their industries may consider the findings

useful not as the alpha and omega but as a possibility. They may also learn from them and avoid major pitfalls.

However attention would be drawn to the following observations:

- Would some of the management issues raised by my research be applicable to managing the implementation or not? What are the management implications of registering the standards on the NQF in Namibia?
- What are the financial implications of standards development in Namibia? Can the country afford to fund the exercise to all industries?
- Is standards development feasible for all levels of the framework?
- Is it feasible to develop standards for all academic qualifications, e.g. a PhD?

In conclusion it is my wish that scholars would find an interest in the area of standards and what contributions education and training standards may have to the reform in education and training system in Namibia in particular and to SADC in general.

It is perhaps not the best and only way to transform education and training systems but the transformational effort needs to go into those areas where participation and opportunity have not been readily available or where there has not been sufficient resource given e.g. vocational education and training, women, and rural societies.

The system aims at making it easy for people to find out what a qualification is all about, where it will lead them, and what other options there are. It aims at transparency in the way assessment is conducted, it measures people against standards and not other people, and offers a basis for recognising prior learning and current competence. It has the potential to be one of the most powerful transformational tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: but it will need outstanding management and leadership.

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# Appendix A

## R-1 (Transcript completed 24 August 2001)

(Respondents' words are printed in bold)

Irene

And how are you?

Fine and you?

I am fine too! A-a Leon, as I explained earlier to you, I am doing this for Masters' course with Rhodes University and it's a half thesis towards the completion of the degree, I need to do a half thesis and I have a-

You said your Masters degree

Yes that's for the Masters degree and my research area is the development of standards, the management of the process. Specifically the one of the Life Assurance Industry...the-the one you were involved in and-a

That's right

I am here just to ask you basic questions on how you experienced the process, how, what you can remember about that process, how it all started

OK

Who, how you were invited and before

OK

I mean I-I ask you specific questions about that process, we can talk about how you- how you were invited, how you found yourself there, what your role was

Ja. The process of invitation was, that that was actually promulgated by the Government and a-ah LAAN that is the overall re-regulatory body for the insurance Industry in Namibia, Hmm, what they have decide, they take up this Act and they decided to actually invite all role players. Hmm-m, in the Life Assurance Industry in Namibia Hmm-m to make commends first of all on this Act, Ah, now we did arrange a meeting, I think in the SWABOULIFE Building where everybody in the HR in the Life Insurance Industry came together, make input on the NQA Act and we submit this input through LAAN, they actually take it further.

The next step was actually where... was supposed or compelled to implement this Act and again LAAN was the person that take the responsibility and the whole industry decided that they want to outsource this whole implementation of the NQA in Namibia to a third party. A-ah what actually happened is that we asked tendered advertised in the media and three companies tendered for the implementation of this process and the chairman of the tender process was a certain Mr Goabab of Swabou Life and the tenders was open in Public and the Open, Namibia Open Learning was the cheapest tender-tender and they get

They send out invitations for the whole training consultation process to all the Life Insurance companies in Namibia and we decided on a certain meeting and at that stage a certain Mr Brian Wood was involved to sensitise us and give us all information on the, on the Act and what have they done in South Africa and we also decided to make use of -of-of Mr Brian Wood of a Learning Network South Africa to sensitise management in Sanlam to take note of this Act and what is the stipulations for the people as well as for the company, so he also did

the same sensitisation campaign or a-ah what we have done to LAAN to management and Executive Management of SANLAM Namibia. The next was actually the-the-the whole process, that's from standards writing, people nominating attend this different courses and again it was a-ah Jeanne Davin of Learning Network Namibia and Mr Brian Wood that was involved, so the whole time, every time when we came together there was people involved from the different a-a academic institutions, Technikons, Polytechnic of Namibia, every time the whole spectrum of either companies and stakeholders was covered, hmm-m and that's how the whole process started

So you did invite the people all the other people by means of letters telephones.

Most of the people were called by what we call mail and we were supposed to in the first week to give all the mail through to Jean and normally all the correspondence was done by mail. The guy that was responsible before Jeanne was actually a-ah what is the guy called, Capricorn

Dante Lotter

Dante, he get all mail addresses of the people, and all the other people that don't have mail addresses normally was posted. So every invitation a-ah from Sanlam, we was involved, the training manager, the marketer, myself as the HR Manager was the whole time involved either in sensitising or standards writing and training of the whole NQA Act, the whole time-time we was involved, everybody from all the different companies in Namibia but all the stakeholders were involved.

Who would you regard as having been the manager of the whole process/Who was sort of leading? Is it...?

The leading person at the beginning was Dante Lotter but I think he was just a representative of the LAAN in...controlling body of the Insurance body in Namibia. So I think LAAN did take the responsibility but actually Insurance was part of the bigger a-ah Finance Industry and the Financial Industry was divided through what they call the Standards Generating overall body divided into Life Insurance, Short term, Banking and other, is all the companies like Alexander Forbes all the brokers business was in others. And from the beginning when they sensitised us-us, we say we was one of the 12 main fields but that one financial was the ...and LAAN then was the body responsible for the long-term Insurance but on the end of the day, each company ...must also take responsibility ...of every company.

Now when you started the development of standards, the real development, the process itself, what role did you play in that?

The—role that we played was input from that industry side on the state side. We was first of all trying to...I think the whole industry, state trade institutions, people from the NQA in Namibia was involved and we learn how the standard should look like. I think the second step was called the writing of standards. And again the industry and everyone was involved where we actually sat together as different parts of industry in-in groups where we had admin, under writers and representative side, sat together and wrote what we as industry...Everybody did have an opportunity, put his input in that situation and what furthermore happened, actually we had a network in each company, like I present, I represented but I was supposed to have a network of 5 people and training manager also had 5 people on his side. Whereafter writing standards we take it back to that network of people and they was supposed to say, is they satisfied with that standards or must we again change to something, that's a more higher standards. So again, if you look at for example if you have 25 people representing industry, again, the network is 25 x25 in all the different companies and I think the input of the whole lot of people.

Okay, that's very interesting to hear, a-ah what were your experiences in general of the way the standards were developed, the your experiences of the process.

Ja, I think it was a positive experience. When we started with sensitising and see the process worked in-in Australia, New Zealand, the most main problem-problem-problem that I have with this process is that some of your line managers in the company still see it as a lot of paperwork added on to their work and that's why it's so important, Irene I think that's the shortcoming at this stage, We have developed some standards a-ah the important part at the end of the day is how we will put the standards into qualifications and recognise the current hmm existing training of people and experience of people over to qualifications. If you don't yell the two, the standards at the end of the day will become

Meaningless

Ja and that process of measuring standards –measuring standards. This NQA and Qualifications, Recognition of qualifications will is the third pillar of our Affirmative Action Act, because that's actually the-upgrading of current people of Sanlam, disadvantaged people that have a lot of experience but no training and no no a-ah a what you call it, no formal, no formal qualifications and didn't have the opportunity to qualified and that you actually can rectify that prior, that prior experience. And if you don't yell the two on the end of the day, and that is at this stage what we are lacking. We have some standards; not all of the 12 industries have standards.

I don't see the actual so what you call the Government can enforce companies how to implement the standards and the measurements of standards and that 's where I see problems with this Act.

Now if we look at the way the process was managed, what, what, how what can you tell me, what was good about the way it was managed or what was bad about the way it was managed, that's now when you were writing the standards, what –what really impressed you or?

I think-I think the most important part of our standards writing was good managed. On the beginning I was a little bit not satisfied with the whole tender process, because the first two times the tender was not on in the media but the last time it was public, public open and after that, after hey decided that Namibia Learning Network will get it a-ah- it was open, everybody was included there was not one person who was not invited.

From the Life.

.... and I can ensure you that I thought that we write high standards especially also for our brokers and advisors side. In the past we did have a lot of nice people. And I think especially after co-operation from Namibia Learning Network, Jeanne Davin and especially Brian Wood from South Africa, it was good managed the training processes was in place, the people were trained, Hmm-m most of the people was involved in this, industry training was done professionally, the whole industry was involved, the stakeholders and the most of the people gave quite very good input. According to me it was quite professionally done.

A-ah ...if you had to advise other industries who wants to start developing their standards what would you regard as the management issues they should look at, while developing their standards, what are the issues that they should consider, what are the issues that would contribute to the successful development of standards.

Irene I think the most important issue is the, the representation of the group. If you decided for example the bank, then all must be presented, what is the what we call the network in the different companies, in place and if once you have that, then you can go a long way. I think that is the most important part. As soon as you have the commitment of the company by identifying people and I think what is important here is the commitment that you try to do it as cheap as possible, people sometimes just see the money on the one hand for implementation of it. So if you can have the commitment have some idea of what it will cost and you can make it as cheap as possible then you have go a long way, but that is that is the most important part. As soon as you have the commitment of the people the training as such and and as long as it is done professional as soon as the people have buy-in into the process, and how it will help the company and the whole industry and sell that that to management and –

and I think the commitment that what is the advantages of such a system, if you can sell that to the people a-ah you have come a long way.

Now, now maybe if you can remember, what do you think how was commitment ensured in your case?

Ja, the long term insurance industry I think did a lot of sensitising at the level of executive level in LAAN and that's what was important, as soon as that executive decided that everybody in LAAN, every company's Chief Executive involved in LAAN and he addressed LAAN where everybody and told the people involved, people this is a Act we should try to do something on this Act, we cannot run away and as soon as they decided that Chief Executive of every company came back to his company to say people there is a Act what must we do. As soon as you have the Chief Executive commitment a-ah and then you will survive, and I reckon actually that maybe you can start on the level that –that is normally the Chief Executive they buy-into the system as a professional body for the whole industry, you will have more commitment A-ah then you starting at HR because that's not an HR job alone, if you just start at your HR people, most of the line managers will say that's a waste of time, it's mainly a waste of money and again a waste of –of paperwork, because they normally see HR work as paperwork and it will give you a lot of... And what I have done in the meantime is, I have also visit South Africa and I have seen what they have done, they are far in front of us already, they are already busy implementing standards, they busy how to develop plans and they can claim some levies back and they has a develop plans. So the Government has already has this chores of companies that don't have a-ah the development of standards and how to measure it, in place, the development of plans can actually serve

Most companies?

Most of the companies at this stage

If there is no enforcement. A-ah now in the, during the stages of developing standards, you mentioned that you had various meetings, different ones, you started with the training of standards, the actual writing and so on. Did you know the people that were involved in the process before?

A few of them, not all of them I have known most of the people that work in the advisory marketing group, but the people in the other companies, in the administration and underwriters I have never met, so I only met them when we start with sensitising and the-the training of standards writing a-ah so I now for the first time met a lot of other people, HR people because we have some kind of IPM but not all the people attend that always and that's also the first time that I met most of the HR people of the other companies, the admin people that was nominated on this course as well as the underwriting people that was nominated, a-ah but above of course, I am close to them, most of them I at least know and not formally met but most of them

Now, how, what, how was your working relationship? Did you have, was is it easy for you to speak to other people, to communicate with them while you were doing the standards or did you have some problems, experience problems?

I think it was easy, you see Irene we are actually a close little family, because that's what LAAN's responsibility is, they suppose to-to manage and keep control of the- the standards and policy and those kind of thing, and normally what happen is as soon as there is some kind of product that is not up to actually not acceptable for the whole market we go to LAAN. The whole problem that we came across is that we and Mutual feel we already have high standards, while some of the small companies felt that if they want to sell some... a-ah we came up with a solution to put it in different levels, so if somebody just sells funeral covers he will only be, need standards level one up to where you actually can, big policies and big most of the companies was satisfied that.

OK, so you –you could resolve your difficulties and disagreement easily.

That's right

That's very good to know that. Ahaa, I think I have asked quite a lot now, I don't know if there is anything that you would like to add.

No, all that I want to add at this stage Irene I think is something as part of the NQA process must take into consideration, we've submit somewhat now our standards, we are waiting for final approval but we will have to do something before it takes a long time...

We sensitise our people to, we write standards and now nothing is happening.

Nothing is happening...and the people became worried, so there's a lot of other companies now working on their standards and at the end of the day the whole banking sectors, the insurance sectors, long term insurance, short term insurance are behind their standards, so there's still a lot of work to be done, but that final implementation, hoe you will-how you will.

...Use the standards

Use the standards for the benefit of the company on the one end of the day, because you spend money to benefit your people and you see as part of your training process, the recognition of your training process, hmm-m the implementation of that final measurement of the standards and how the recognition will take place, hmm-m is important otherwise people will say it was an HR and non-existing function again and again I think that is supposed to happen soon.

Before you conclude I wanted to ask you about t the composition of the Life Assurance Sector. How many companies were involved?

How many companies, eight

Can you remember or do you have –do you have some documents outlining the –the composition of the LAAN.

A-ah I don't have that but I think Dante Lotter will have and in LAAN every insurance company is represented, now I know for a fact that with regard to Mutual, Sanlam, Fedsure, there is about 5 smaller companies, I am not too quite sure, every company that want to write long term Insurance in Namibia must become member, must be registered member with the registered of companies in Namibia as well as with LAAN because LAAN is the regulatory body of the industry. So as soon as something is wrong like there's a new company and they sell a policy that's not acceptable, then normally someone is going to LAAN saying this company is selling a policy without whatever recognition or principles that normally stipulates what you should do and then, the-the registration of institutions can go in.

Thanks very much ...it was good to interview you, I hope I, what you have said, you have said quite a lot and I know it is going to be useful for my thesis for writing my thesis.

## Appendix B

### R-2 (Transcript completed 08 January 2002).

Morning Irene.

How are you?

Well-well, I am fine and you?

I am also fine

That's good

R-2, as I explained to you earlier, I, the interviews that I held the other day were not audible enough for me to-to transcribe, and that is why I am back again to find out what I wanted to know the first time, so we are not going to waste anytime, will just time we are just going to start now because it is a repetition.

OK!

What can you tell me about the process? The, Let me first of all start, how did you get involved in the process of generating standards for the life insurance industry.

O right, Irene, Hmm, at the time that the-the process started, I was working for Metropolitan Namibia as a training officer and-a my manager initially he was invited and he felt that it might be better for me to attend instead of him because me being the trainer, it would benefit me more to ha-ha help set the standards and I was then co-opted into the body assembled by LAAN, now LAAN is the Life Assurance Association of Namibia and from the different companies, different people were co-opted to sit on that-that standards writing body, that's how I got there.

OK, now can you tell me about what you did, what role you played?

Ha-a, what I mostly contributed to and the role that I played was because not all the people that was attending, co-opted to this body were trainers and not all of them knew exactly what standards, ha-ha need to be set for the training of people in the industry.  
Hmm So from my side, my biggest contribution was to explain what we were currently doing in the industry...and I was assisted in that process by my other Ha-a colleagues in other companies like Sanlam, Old Mutual etc., the training officers of these companies and our role was mostly to to-to indicate to the people what we are doing, what we would like to see being done and then we started to help them set the standards, that's what our role was.

Ha, so you, you-you had to, you, your role was more to explain, what standards you needed and then you started.

Ja

Okay, how did you start?

Ha, we were divided into different groups, ha-a like the underwriters, the new business processing people, trainers, administration people and each group

Him

...Then went separately and started to work on what they would like to see to happen in the industry, but we were then also taught, the the-the facilitator took us through the process of identifying, the criteria for identifying the good standards and then how to write a good standard, so we started on the basic elements and then we went through to the different units and then we went to the final stage where we then wrote standards, then the group came back and report to the facilitator to see how we went through the process and whether we took the right steps, that's how we started.

Ha, now, what can you tell me about the way it was managed, the process was managed.

Irene I would like say magnificently, it was managed properly, Brian Wood was the facilitator and really guided us professionally through the whole process of standards setting. You see, what happened in the past is, we had certain things that we expected people to know but since most of us were not in the position of writing proper standards.

I believe that there was a lack of quality in most of our training not most but some of our training not most but some of our training there was a lack of quality and Brian was able to guide us through the process of writing proper standards and that, by doing that he managed the process so well that at the end of the first session we were able to identify good or bad or weak, let me say good or weak standards, so-so he was doing and very knowledgeable of the subject and also the way that he facilitated the process was so informal but captive, so you couldn't sleep but it ,ha ,wasn't like in a school classroom situation, he managed it very well.

So you you-you are emphasising the role of the facilitator here as having been of- of good influence to the-to the process of setting your standards, okay now, what, as you also said you think it was successful, it was well-managed, what do you think what contributed to this apart from the role of the facilitator?

Ha

Other factors that you think might have contributed to the well management of the process.

Ja, Ha, Irene, I will say also the willingness of the participants, the delegates to work together because what we were doing there was not for a particular company but for the industry as such and since we were co-opted by our companies, excuse me, we had the responsibility to ha-a, see to it that we contribute, we take on what we get, what is good out of the system or the process so that we could take it back to our companies for evaluation, what we also knew what was going to come out was going to be a standard not for Metropolitan, Mutual or Sanlam but for the whole industry as such and ha-a when we went in with that spirit ,you could see that people in the past, that greeted each other like , Good Morning ,how are you, now started to held conversation, and instead of the old island type attitude that we had, Sanlam island, metropolitan island, we suddenly started to work together as a group like the Comoros, the Comoros island is a group of small islands but its one country, we started to have that feeling of belonging, and that contributed massively to the success of the process.

That's very interesting that one can really pick other things such as those ones, so it's more, you are mentioning things like the commitment, the participants, the willingness to work together, the feeling of belonging, belongingness, you become like a family, but overall, were there people that felt they were left out or of the process, maybe within the industry or do you think that everybody was really involved in managing the process until its finishing.

Ha-.Irene, we had a situation where some people from some companies' felt that they were more superior than other people from other companies. I wouldn't like to mention names.

Ja- Ja

...But we had the situation in the industry where people felt that this company is the best or better than this company, but when we got there, we found out that we- we equals, so we-we started to reach out and people suddenly instead of having this superior attitude, ha, started to well that was my observation to reach out and say, guys this is for one common goals, let's go

for it, so in the beginning we were just feeling out each other, I would say by 10 o'clock the first morning we had broke all the barriers.

Oh, that was good, that was really good, okay, ha-a, R-2, now you have gone through the process, if you had to advise other industries that want to start with writing ha- standards for their industries, what would you advise them on, especially on how to manage the process, what are the key issues that they should really look at or that are important in order to manage. I know you have mentioned some of them throughout ha-a, the discussion. What key issues can you think about?

Irene, first of all I would like to see that that industries that ha- is still to write their standards need to do exactly the same as we did and Ha get a group of people to together from different representatives of the industries and the sit down and make and analysis of what is currently happening in the industry, I think it is the first issue that they should take into consideration to make an analysis of the status quo and then to take that analysis and use it as a guiding document into writing the standards and they should I.I-I would suggest and propose that they should go through the same process by inviting somebody, who can help them with the analysis, with the explanation of the criteria of standards, how to write standards and then send them back, to write standards, come back for the evaluation and then finalising it, that is very important they should do, but then also what I would like to advise other industries to do, they should when they appoint people, they should appoint people across the board not only take the-the top structure of people .

OK,

...They should start from the grassroots up to the CEOs, we were in a very lucky position that we, were having people in the GM positions so that was very good, that was very close to CEOs. We also had people that were administrators, basic administration and I would advise industries to look at because then people hear each other from one side of the room to the other side of the room or one side of the organisation to the other side of the organisation, they hear each other what the expectations are and then they can meet each other half -way and say OK, but I thought that it was suppose to be like that and the other person say I thought it was suppose to be like this. Now we see and the whole organisation can benefit from that or the whole industry as such.

So involving more people, involving a variety of people is also very important

Exactly

So, R-2, anything else maybe that you can think about that I didn't ask, that you want to... just talk about.

Ha-a Irene there is something that is very important to me, I would really like to see that the standards writing, the setting of standards setting bodies to gain momentum, ha-a especially in this year, so that has I believe that it will also lighten the burden of your organisation, the NQA, when the industries can start to get the ball rolling in the writing of their standards, so that we could move closer to ha-ha the registration, ha-ha the-the accreditation and all those things, of standardising the standards of an industry aligning it with your goals, I would like to see that happen, maybe if if-if your organisation, the NQA could start to train people or get people trained on the facilitation of standards setting to go out to assist....

...And help

.... To help the different industries to get that done. I wouldn't like to put a timeframe on it but I would really like to see that this thing can be done in this year, 2002, so that by 2003-2003, we might get to a point where the alignment is done from what the government says is a certain qualifications and the requirements of that qualification, that the industries know what to do to get their people to that different qualification.

That's really what I think most people want is to register, start to register standards and not just write and keep them.

Ja.

But that can be discussed at a different level.

Ja

Oh, but let me use the opportunity then, if there is nothing else, to thank you for participating in the research, I hope to come back to you and perhaps discuss the outcome of my thesis.

Hm.

Thanks very much.

Thank you, Irene, that was a pleasure.

## Appendix C

### R-3 (Transcript completed 9 January 2002)

R-3, as I explained to you the tape that I recorded the other time were not very audible and that is why I am back now. I must thank you for allowing me to interview the second time. I know not everything will be the same but I am back again to hear what I wanted to hear in the first place.

You are welcome, I hope that I remember everything as I said it's two years back but I trust I will remember everything.

R-3, you know as you remember we were talking about the management of the Life Assurance industry, a-a standards generating body, when, can you tell me how the process started, maybe we should, can start from there, what can you remember how did you start.

Okay, basically as I can remember it, hmm, Mr Dante Lotter was on the NQA a-a representative for the financial industry and he take a lot of leadership, I think of-of introducing the concept, introducing the Act, to the financial industry and whole. Basically we started of at a-a having a workshop for the financial industry, were we got speakers in from South Africa, that's been through this process, how they have been through.... and the whole objective of that workshop was just to inform the industry on that.

After that workshop we mainly the whole industry was then called. I was elected as a project manager and my task was more to co-ordinate, convene and get the process going. What I basically done is me and Mr Lotter at that stage physically went and we've made appointment with all the...we had a top-down approach basically. Then basically the, we identified three, one NSSB for the whole financial industry but then four standards generating bodies that had to come up with their standards for different areas. We identified, identified Life Insurance then short term insurance, banking and others like other brokers etc.

I was involved in the Life Insurance. We set the process; we identified LAAN, which is the-the professional association of the Life Insurance industry. They set a Standards generating body and the standards generating body was there to come up with the standards with the help of facilitator, they went on tender for the project of generating standards, facilitating and training that standards generating body and do that. Basically they went on tender, they appoint a tender and the Learning network was appointed.

So we identified all the big Life Insurance companies, we also identified all the bigger banks. We only have four banks in Namibia. We've identified all of them. We set meetings with the financial, with the MD's, together with their HR staff in management and we basically introduced to them a-a in a friendly way the Act and the road ahead. At that stage we had sort of planning program, how to do it, e-e and we actually asked them to give their co-operation in the form of staff and their consent on the process.

E-h and being positive that so that we can go ahead and put the standards on the table because we can't run away of it and we said make it positive make it your standards and be actively and proactively involved in the process to do the job. It was a very qualified person; Mr Brian Wood very qualified in the job and the workshop was set for the Standards generating body. We also identified important people that should be involved with the standard generating body and we involved the polytechnic, the educational people, the university, we also involved the ministry of finance as well as the NQA members, we invited them to all the workshop to make it, make it a participative process so we sure we were doing the right things and I think the workshop went very well, there was objectives for each workshop we started at zero and we ended basically with the final standards.

When I say zero we didn't start with other people's standards, we came up with our own standards. Obviously they were led by the role models of New Zealand, a bit of Scotland and a bit of South Africa, but the crux is the standards generating body with the training they got and the expertise they got is that they were able to come up with their own standards, which is very positive for Namibia.

After the standards, the draft document was completed, the Standards Generating body identified an expert network, this document was actually sent to about 50 people, not precisely sure about the fifty but in around plus-minus fifty, roughly fifty people, experts in the industry on specific standards and I sent them comments. They came back with their comments, we attended to their effort and Brian edited the whole document again, it was also sent to Laan and they also sent their comments in and as I said that all those comments was worked in those standards and now we've sent it to the NQA for final guideline before we put it up for registration, so we are just awaiting the final feedback so we can do a few editing on that document, so we will put it up for registration and we trust that they will be life standards and not dead standards that will be and that the companies will implement it, I think that is the next step, that they will work according to that standard.

You have really said a mouthful in one go, thanks. I, you have explained the process very well, how you started, what you did in every stage, every session and how it went about, now what perhaps would you consider, I think from listening to you, I think you are saying that the process went very well, the management of the process was well, now what would you consider as the most important factors that contributed to the success of managing the standards generating process for the Life Insurance Industry.

According to me it is three-fold. Firstly, the management of the top big companies that actually pay for the process, pay via experts and they also pay via opportunity costs via the standards generating body, that they buy into the process...as well as LAAN which is a professional body that bought into the process and they are convinced that that is what they should do. Because if they are positive, it will filter through to the industry and all the people involved in that process will then be positive, first step.

Second step there 's no way that people can do it, I believe in tendering the process to expert people that work with it and I also believe in the project leader, because myself was locally for organising the whole thing, putting up e-mails, organising that all documents get to the people answering queries, giving a presentations to the. Sorry for the telephone that interrupted us. OK, basically I said the project leader is very important, Because a project leader is basically in-between the professional body and the expert and assisting the standards generating body to come up with, because they, they got a full time job, they are just involved in the workshops, then the expert goes back and facilitate and give them standards, then it goes back to the standards generating body via the project leader and the project leader is there to answer the questions to help them to get feedback back again to the expert.

I think is very important, the role of the project leader as well because the expert is too expensive, hmm, basically to do that role as well, they are just focussing on coming up with the results and the project leader is focussing on co-ordinating, managing the process. The Standards generating body is focussed on getting proper results out that they can live with Namibian standards and I think that is what the professional body also wants.

I think you mentioned three things the third one..?

As I said basically, the first one was that management must buy into it, secondly you should tender it to experts and third I would say a project leader to co-ordinate, I think that is a success.

Okay, what about the people themselves that are participants in the process itself. Do you think that they might also contribute to the success of it?

Yes, when it is definitely, middle to high qualified people that is involved in the standards generating body, because it is a very important role that they played, if it's not management

then its people that have technical knowledge on the field specifically in technical standards, where people should be in the job to understand what the standard should be and what was really interesting for me was that people like underwriters of different companies that was supposed to be competing against one another, when they work in an SGB towards a mutual standards and that the one said this, yes and the other one said but they all add to want to come up with one standard. And I think that's good for the industry to have some communication on jobs what do you want and what is really professional service.

So that was actually very interesting and I think the standards generating body also learned from one another on certain aspects of the industry and I think some of the problems in the industry was addressed from different angles, you know a problem is not a problem to you if it works for you, but the other company might see it as a problem because they might think that you are unethical in the way that you're doing business many of these problems were actually addressed in a very professional way.

R-3, what would you consider as anything that was not very good during the process. Anything that you can think of before we go to what was good.

I think the most frustrating thing is, one must just remember, it is not a thing, it is a country thing, it is actually a participatory thing and many people as possible should see the standards, also all NSSB members, the documents went out to them, they were not actively involved in the process, so it's obviously difficult for them in their daily tasks to fit in this massive document, go through it give us feedback so I had to go down on them sometimes and beg them please, please give us feedback but then we did get some very good feedback so but that is time-consuming, I think that the biggest frustration for me at this time, is time get to the final result and I think we are very close to there.

Okay, what good, what was good, too good.

Basically I think the expert that obtained the tender was very good, a-a also experienced by the SGB as a very professional person and I think that was very positive think the members of the SGB also did a very good job, and I also think LAAN as a professional body was proactive, went through the process, didn't prolong it as many of the other institutions at this moment in time is. I don't think they are running with the process they just let it hang in the middle of nowhere. So I think they were very pro-active, there was a schedule drawn up with time fitted into those, I think if you want something done in life you must add time to it otherwise it becomes a ever, never-ending story. Hmm, basically that is it.

Okay R-3, what would your advise be to other industries that would want to start with writing standards for their industries.

As I said....

regarding managing the process.

Ja. I think as I said because is those three individuals first of all, management of the companies must understand the process and realise how important it is and also then filter that down to the management positions, let them know what it is all about, first of all. Secondly go out on tender, decide on a on a professional person with a time schedule and get yourself a project manager to handle the process for you and put a time-table to it and get as many people as possible involved, so that especially from the NQA and the ministry of finance and from the educational body because I think the more people you get involved, the more they will know about your standards and they will be part of standards because they will contributed to your standards and I think it is a positive thing to your country to go that way.

Ah, I think, you, I have really finished with all my questions unless you have something to add before we close.

No, I think it went very well and we are happy with the process.

Thank you very much, R-3, I hope to see you again.

## Appendix D

### Letter requesting cooperation of research participants

RHODES UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Name: Himeesora Irene Kaimu

Course: Masters in Education Leadership and Management

REQUEST OF STAFF MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH:

I am a part-time student of the Masters in Educational Leadership and Management at the Rhodes University in the Republic of South Africa.

As part of this programme, I am expected to prepare a thesis the first draft of which is due for submission towards October 2001.

The theme of my proposed thesis is: "A critical investigation of the management of the standards development process within the life Insurance Industry in Namibia".

I am aware that some members of your staff participated in the Standards Generating process of the Life Insurance Industry in Namibia from September -December 2000.

It is against this background that I would like to humbly request your consent to allow me to interview them (should they be willing to participate) in order for me to complete my chosen research.

I give my assurance to you that the information provided would be utilised with extreme tact and only for academic purposes.

Please complete the following information to give consent:

Name Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Company : \_\_\_\_\_

Person participating in the research: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview schedule**

I know you participated as a member of the Standards Generating Body for the development of standards in the Life Insurance Industry?

1. What can you tell me about the process? How did it all start? Who invited you to become a member?
2. What role did you play? How did your role contribute to the management of the process?
3. Who managed the process? How was the process managed? Did everyone participate in the management of the process?
4. What are your experiences of the process? From the beginning to the end?
5. What was good about the way it was managed, and what do you consider as bad or not very desirable?
6. What improvements would they have made if you had to repeat the process?
7. What do they consider as the major reasons that have contributed to the completion of the process?

# Appendix F

## Example of Unit Standard

NQA Unit Standard No: LI/01

**Title:** Establish client contact to arrange a sales opportunity

**Level:** 2

**Credit:** 4

**Field:** Business, Commerce and Management Studies

**Sub-Field:** Finance: Life Insurance - generic

**Issue Date:** January 2001

**Review Date:** January 2004

**Learning assumed to be in place**

Open: No specific skill or knowledge requirements apart from fundamental skills.

Fundamental skills: Communication competence at level equivalent to NQF Level 4, and

Maths skills equivalent to NQF Level 3 will facilitate learning towards this standard.

---

### **Purpose:**

Persons credited with this unit standard are able to:

identify and classify clients with a view to a sales opportunity

arrange and confirm a meeting

complete preparations for a first contact

This standard is useful to intermediaries and personal assistants in the Life Insurance Industry.

It is important for people who are required to identify and select prospects and set up sales opportunities.

### **Elements and Performance criteria**

#### **element 1:**

Identify and classify clients with a view to a sales opportunity.

#### **performance criteria:**

1.1. Different methods of prospecting are identified. Each method is explained with reference to advantages, disadvantages and likelihood of success.

*Range: Prospecting methods must include:* telephone, door-to-door, client referrals, company leads, direct marketing via mail, media leads

1.2. Prospects identified are realistic according to company guidelines and/or documented best practice for the method. Contact details are established and confirmed ahead of the first approach.

*Range:*

*Contact details must include:* name, organisation, physical address (home and business), telephone number

1.3. The prospect's current insurance provision is established. Any conflict of interest with own company intermediaries is determined in accordance with professional and ethical codes of practice.

*Range:*

*establishing current provision include:* oral questions to the client and/or questionnaires, review of salary advice, tracing computer databases,

1.4. Prospects are sorted and listed according to the prospecting method. Prospects are prioritised in terms of the likelihood of a sale.

1.5. Information is available in a format that allows for ease of use, for planning purposes and in line with company formats and/or guidelines where appropriate.

**element 2:**

Arrange and confirm a meeting.

**performance criteria:**

2.1. The method of contact is in line with the type of prospect and appropriate to the type of sale or sales presentation.

**Range:**

*Method of contact must include at least three of:* telephone, personal call, email, mail, website

*Type of sale includes:* telephonic, one-on-one, general and special group presentations

2.2. The approach is conducted in a manner that promotes positive interaction and the likelihood of a meeting.

**Range:**

*manner includes:* tone of voice, choice of language, body language, facial expression, degree of politeness

2.3. Information conveyed to the prospect is relevant to the desired sale and opportunity is provided for questions of clarification from the prospect.

2.4. Communication is concise and clear, and the language level is appropriate to the particular contact.

2.5. The methods used to initiate and maintain the contact are appropriate to the context and type of sales prospect.

**Range:**

*Methods must include:* use of open-ended questions, requests to call back,

2.6. Meeting details are complete, recorded and confirmed before the contact is terminated.

**Range:**

*Meeting details must include:* purpose, date, time, venue

2.7. Own details provided to the prospect are comprehensive and accurate, and are offered to the prospect, together with alternatives, to facilitate contact.

**element 3:**

Complete preparations for a first contact.

**performance criteria:**

3.1. Meeting details are recorded in the agreed format and communicated to affected parties, as required, in accordance with company policies and procedures.

**Range:**

*Affected parties may include:* administration, intermediaries, sales managers

3.2. Materials for the presentation are appropriate in terms of the purpose and nature of the meeting.

3.3. Materials, including existing portfolios where possible, are complete and available on time for the presentation.

3.4. The meeting is confirmed within the agreed timeframe before the meeting. The channel used complies with agreements with the prospect, and company policies and procedures.

Range:

*Channels must include:* telephone and/or email

**Accreditation Options:** Providers of learning towards this unit standard will need to meet the accreditation requirements of the NQA and of LAAN.

**Moderation Option:** The moderation requirements of LAAN must be met in order to award credit to learners for this unit standard.

**Notes:**

1. Notes to assessors:

Assessors should keep the following general principles in mind when designing and conducting assessments against this unit standard:

Focus the assessment activities on gathering evidence in terms of the main outcome expressed in the title to ensure assessment is integrated rather than fragmented. Remember we want to declare the person competent in terms of the title. Where assessment at title level is unmanageable, then focus assessment around each specific outcome, or groups of specific outcomes.

Make sure evidence is gathered across the entire range, wherever it applies. Assessment activities should be as close to the real performance as possible, and where simulations or role-plays are used, there should be supporting evidence to show the candidate is able to perform in the real situation.

Do not focus the assessment activities on each assessment criterion. Rather make sure the assessment activities focus on outcomes and are sufficient to enable evidence to be gathered around all the assessment criteria.

The assessment criteria provide the specifications against which assessment judgements should be made. In most cases, knowledge can be inferred from the quality of the performances, but in other cases, knowledge and understanding will have to be tested through questioning techniques. Where this is required, there will be assessment criteria to specify the standard required.

The task of the assessor is to *gather sufficient evidence, of the prescribed type and quality, as specified in this unit standard, that the candidate can achieve the outcomes again and again and again.* This means assessors will have to judge how many repeat performances are required before they believe the performance is reproducible.

All assessments should be conducted in line with the following well documented principles of assessment: *appropriateness, fairness, manageability, integration into work or learning, validity, direct, authentic, sufficient, systematic, open and consistent.*

2. Generic Outcomes:

This unit standard promotes, in particular, the following critical cross-field outcomes:

identify and solve problems: in relation to client needs.

work effectively with others and in teams: to provide effective and efficient client service.

organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively: so as to deliver to the client within the promised time

collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information: fundamental to the process of gathering information and identifying solutions.

communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills: critical to presenting information and solutions to clients

understand the world as a set of inter-related parts of a system: in relation to cause, effect and prevention

contribute to the full development of oneself.

3. Embedded Knowledge:

The following essential embedded knowledge will be assessed through assessment of the specific outcomes in terms of the stipulated assessment criteria. Candidates are unlikely to achieve all the specific outcomes, to the standards described in the assessment criteria, without knowledge of the listed embedded knowledge. This means that for the most part, the possession or lack of the knowledge can be directly inferred from the quality of the

candidate's performance. Where direct assessment of knowledge is required, assessment criteria have been included in the body of the unit standard.

Customer profiles

Policy types

Time management

Database management

Customer service skills