



## DEASA COUNTRY REPORT – NAMIBIA

### DEASA AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

INSTITUTION	CONTACT PERSON
UNAM: Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT)	Dr. Maggy Beukes-Amiss
<b>Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL)</b>	Dr Heroldt Murangi
Institute for Open Learning (IOL)	Ms. Ilana Calitz
NUST: Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning	Mr Wynand Diergaardt
Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet):	Ms. Anna Imalwa
International University of Management:	Prof Fred Opali

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## **List of Acronyms**

**AB** - Advisory Board

**AGYW** – Adolescent Girls and Young Women

**BOU** - Botswana Open University

**CDT** – Courseware Development Team

**CODEL** – Centre for Open, Distance and eLearning

**COL** - Commonwealth of Learning

**COLL** - Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning

**CQAC** - Common Quality Assurance Criteria

**DEASA** - Distance Education Association of Southern Africa

**DREAMS** - Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe

**MoU** - Memorandum of Understanding

**NAMCOL** - Namibian College of Open Learning

**NOLNet** - Namibian Open Learning Network Trust

**NSSCO** - Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary

**NUST** – Namibia University of Science and Technology

**SaCaLLs** - Satellite Campuses and Lifelong Learning Support

**STEM** - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

**ODL** - Open and Distance Learning

**OUM** - Open University of Mauritius

**UNAM** – University of Namibia

**QA** - Quality Assurance

## 1. Introduction

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the year 2022 marked the recovery year from the impact of the outbreak of the pandemic worldwide and Namibia has no exemption. Research has indicated that the pandemic had a devastating effect on all sectors and education was not spared. Most if not all educational institutions suffered great losses in terms of teaching and learning. Universities and Colleges were forced to close or find alternative ways to keep the teaching and learning going. The impact of this pandemic will continue to be felt for many years to come. This report encapsulates activities and interventions of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) providers in Namibia for the period 01 July 2022 to 31 June 2023. Namibia as a member state of the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) represented by six ODL institutions is required to furnish a country report. The report is framed on five DEASA Key Performance Area (KPA) that were carried out by the following ODL providers in Namibia. These are the: Namibian College of Open Learning (**NAMCOL**); Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) , University of Namibia (**UNAM-CILT**), Satellite Campuses and Lifelong Learning Support (SaCaLLs), Namibia University of Science and Technology (**NUST-SaCaLLs**), **Institute for Open Learning (IOL)** and Center for Distance and e-Learning, International University of Management (**IUM-CDeL**) under the umbrella of the National ODL Network Trust, the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (**NOLNet**).

## 2.DEASA Key Performance Areas (KPA)

### 2.1 KPA 1: Research Activities

During the period under review, a research study was conducted by NAMCOL to determine the progress made in implementing block tuitions at the College. The study focused specifically on the administration, learner participation and challenges faced by Head of Centres (HoCs) and Tutors. The study made recommendations on how block tuition offering might be improved.

Additionally, a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) tracer study was conducted and an article has been published in August 2022 by the Journal of Learning for Development published by the Common Wealth of Learning, available at this link: <https://jl4d.org/index.php/ejl4d/issue/view/28>.

On the other hand, the Institute for Open Learning (IOL) did not undertake extensive research activities during the reporting period . Nevertheless, it has devised plans to participate in upcoming research projects and engage in research collaboration. One

noteworthy initiative is IOL's intention to collaborate with the International University of Management (IUM) and the Association for Private Higher Education Institutions, Namibia (APHEIN) by participating in their annual research project. This collaborative effort reflects IOL's dedication to fostering research collaboration within the broader academic community. Furthermore, IOL aims to conduct a research study focusing on needs analysis. The primary objective of this study is to identify areas of demand and explore potential new qualifications that can be offered in Namibia. Through this research, IOL aims to align its educational offerings with the evolving needs of the Namibian workforce and society. It is essential to mention that at present, IOL does not provide postgraduate studies that involve extensive research, such as Master's and Doctorate degrees. However, IOL actively engages in the evaluation and examination of research proposals submitted by students pursuing a Bachelor's Degree (Honours) in Education and the Bachelor of Education in Senior Secondary Education. This meticulous process ensures that the research proposals meet the necessary academic standards and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of education.

In an effort to promote research and publication, NOLNET awarded research grant to a team comprises of staff members from partner institutions to conduct a collaborative research study. A research grant to the value of N\$ 25 232.00 was awarded to three staff members from the NOLNet partner institutions for a collaborative research. The research project titled "Work Integrated Learning in the Context of Covid 19 among Open and Distance Learning stakeholders was successfully completed during the reporting period. A paper was presented at the 56<sup>th</sup> DEASA conference and was submitted for possible publication.

Notwithstanding the above, staff members from UNAM successfully presented research papers as follow;

Haiping, E. (02 – 04 November 2022). *Using Activity-Centred Analysis and Design to develop a framework for applying Learning Analytics to Learning Design in ODeL* [Paper presentation]. 56th Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) Conference 2022, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia.

Limbo, S. (02 – 04 November 2022). *An eLearning Framework for Resource Constrained Educational Institutions*. [Paper presentation]. 56th Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) Conference 2022, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia.

Ngipandulwa, L. (02 – 04 November 2022). *Work Integrated Learning in the Context of Covid-19 among Open and Distance Learning stakeholders*. [Paper presentation]. 56th Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) Conference 2022, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia.

Shemuketa, H. (02 – 04 November 2022). *Lecturers' and Students' Perceptions of the Barriers to Effective Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in two campuses of a Namibian public university*. [Paper presentation]. 56th Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) Conference 2022, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia.

Uunona, G. & Haiping, E. (02 – 04 November 2022). *Promoting online teaching through educator capacity development: a case of Online Pedagogies course at the University of Namibia* [Paper presentation]. 56th Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) Conference 2022, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia.

## **Publications for 2022 and 2023**

**The following research paper was successfully published during the reporting period;**

Beukes-Amiss, C. M., Haiping, Erkkie. (2022). Keeping Learning Open during Covid-19 and beyond through Innovative Learning Design: A Case Study of the University of Namibia. *Pan-Commonwealth Forum 10 (PCF10)*, 2022. DOI: 10.56059/pcf10.9219, <https://doi.org/10.56059/pcf10.9219>

## **2.2 KPA 2: Capacity Building**

NAMCOL hosted a research day with the aim of providing a platform for staff to share their research studies with other staff members. Staff members shared their experiences on various areas including fostering a research culture, the perception of faculty members of the Namibian Open Distance Learning Institutions (NODLI) on the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and evaluating cloud security vs conventional network security. Additionally, a training in article writing and publication was held in May 2023, with the aim of not only capacitation of staff members in article writing, but also to enable staff members to undertake and oversee research projects.

On the other hand, IOL organized four (4) capacity building interventions namely; *Tutor Development Workshop, Tutor training on Assessment, Training on Microsoft 365 and*

*Training on email outlook.* Tutor Development Workshop, aimed at enhancing teaching, assessment, and moderation practices of its tutors. The workshop focuses on innovative teaching methodologies and effective assessment strategies, aiming to improve the quality of education offered by the institution. IOL invites experienced facilitators, who are experts in the field of teaching and assessment, to conduct the workshop. The workshop then moved on to sessions focused on effective assessment strategies. The tutors learned about various assessment methods, including formative and summative assessments, authentic assessments, rubric design, and feedback techniques. They also discuss strategies for aligning assessments with learning outcomes.

Conversely IOL has a specific module dedicated to training tutors on the proper procedures for setting, marking, and moderating examinations and assignments. The tutors learn about the importance of maintaining fairness, consistency, and reliability in assessment practices.



**Figure 1: Tutor Development Workshop**

IOL provides the tutors with resource materials, such as handouts, guidelines, and examples, to support their learning during the workshop. These materials serve as references for tutors to consult and apply in their teaching and assessment practices. Tutor Development Workshop is not a one-time event. IOL establishes mechanisms for ongoing support and follow-up after the workshop. This include regular mentorship and online platforms where

tutors can continue to exchange ideas, share experiences, and seek guidance from their colleagues and facilitators.

In addition to the Tutor Development Workshop, IOL also provided training to its tutors on effectively and efficiently utilizing Microsoft 365. This training aims to enhance collaboration among academic staff, tutors, and students. Tutors receive training specifically on Microsoft Teams, which serves as a central platform for communication and collaboration. They learn how to create and manage Teams, set up channels for discussions, share files and resources, conduct virtual meetings and classes, and facilitate online group work. Best practices for fostering student engagement and interaction within Teams are also emphasized.

Tutors also receive training on effectively utilizing Outlook for email communication, calendar management, and scheduling appointments or virtual meetings. They learn how to streamline their communication with students, academic staff, and other stakeholders using Outlook's features. By training its tutors on effectively using Microsoft 365, IOL aims to enhance collaboration, communication, and engagement among academic staff, tutors, and students. This equips tutors with the necessary digital skills to leverage technology for improved teaching and learning outcomes to support the Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL) model.

On the contrary, UNAM through CILT in collaboration with partners such as the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), CILT benefited and coordinated capacity building interventions during the reporting period.

***The table below illustrates a number of training interventions conducted;***

Facilitator	Dates	Nature of Training	Beneficiaries
CILT	30 May – 31 August 2022	Online Pedagogies Short Course	Basic education and higher education educators, training officials
CILT	12 December 2022	Training: Introduction to Blended Learning	UNAM academic leaders (Executive Deans, Associate Deans, Heads of Departments, Academic Coordinators), lecturers, learning designers
CILT & SAIDE	10 February 2023	Webinar: Supporting active learning in online learning environments	UNAM academic staff
CILT	01 March 2023	Blended Learning Implementation Workshop	UNAM academic leaders (Executive Deans, Associate Deans, Heads of Departments, Academic Coordinators), lecturers, learning



			designers
CILT	17 March 2023	Webinar: Flipped Classroom	UNAM academic staff
CILT & SAIDE	31 March 2023	Webinar: Open Educational Resources: use in Teaching	UNAM academic staff
CILT & SAIDE	05 May 2023	Webinar: Monitoring quality of Blended Courses	UNAM academic staff

### 2.3 KPA 3: Partnership and Collaboration

As part of the strategic objectives to strengthen networking and partnerships among the ODL institutions, the following agreements were established and signed.

NAMCOL signed two (2) partnership agreements with two schools and one Vocational Training Centre. The college entered and signed with Gabriel Taapopi Senior Secondary School and Mwachina Gwanembenge Senior Secondary School for Office Administration trainees' job attachment and Nakayale VTC for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The College further signed three (3) MoUs with Namibian Aviation Training Association (NATA) to offer aviation technical courses, Homestead Skills & Educational Academy and AGRA Provision to form partnerships in offering ICT, Facility Maintenance and Agriculture courses.

In February 2023, the College also entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for the College to organize and host an international Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) workshop which took place from 27 February – 01 March 2023. Participants were delegates from Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Ghana, Botswana and Canada.

IOL recognizes the importance of international benchmarking and interactions in the field of distance education. To strengthen its connections and stay updated with global practices, IOL joined various local and international bodies related to distance education, such as NOLNet, SAQAN, and DEASA. IOL's involvement with these organisations or associations may enhance its international benchmarking and interactions:

### 3.1.NOLNet (Namibia Open Learning Network Trust)

IOL joined NOLNet, a local network dedicated to promoting open and distance learning in Namibia. Through NOLNet, IOL will gain access to a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint initiatives among institutions offering distance education. IOL participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars organized by NOLNet to exchange ideas, discuss best practices, and learn from other members of the network.

### 3.2.SAQAN (Southern African Quality Assurance Network)

By joining SAQAN, a regional network focused on quality assurance in higher education, IOL aligns itself with a community of institutions committed to ensuring high standards in distance education. IOL will participate in quality assurance workshops, share its own quality assurance practices, and learn from the experiences of other members in the network. This involvement helps IOL benchmark its programs and processes against regional standards and continuously improve its educational offerings.

### 3.3.DEASA (Distance Education Association of Southern Africa)

IOL's membership in DEASA provides opportunities for broader engagement with the distance education community in the Southern African region. DEASA organises conferences, symposiums, and working groups where IOL can connect with peers, researchers, and experts in the field. Through DEASA, IOL can showcase its own innovations, contribute to discussions on distance education policies and practices, and explore potential collaborations for research and development initiatives. By actively engaging with NOLNet, SAQAN, and DEASA, IOL gains exposure to international benchmarks and best practices in distance education

CILT collaborated with the following partners on the below-mentioned activities

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Stakeholder/ Partner	Nature of collaboration	Activities
South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)	Academic development and training	Co-planning and delivery of academic development programmes. Training of lecturers on adoption of blended learning, OER and innovative assessment
AdaptIT	Collaborative activities through a Memorandum of Agreement	Benchmarking on use of Moodle in higher education; training of Moodle novice users through creation of user manuals and tutorials
Commonwealth of Learning	Training of educators	Promotion of innovative learning design approaches in implementing blended and online learning

## 2.4 KPA 4: Policy Development and Facilitation

NAMCOL developed a policy register that outlines all institutional policies, guidelines and procedures. The College has established and implemented strategies which ensures that all policies are reviewed regularly to keep them current, and fully implemented.

The IOL Executive Committee (EXCO) responsible for policy development and facilitation. conducted a comprehensive analysis of existing policies, both within the institution and in the broader context of distance education. It identifies areas where new policies are needed or existing policies require revision. EXCO engages in extensive consultation with various stakeholders within IOL, including academic staff, tutors, support staff and students' representatives. This consultation process ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, and the policies reflect the needs and aspirations of the IOL community.

During the reporting period, the IOL reviewed and produced several key policies, including the Quality Assurance Policy, IOL Academic Integrity Policy, and Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure

### **Quality Assurance Policy**

The Quality Assurance Policy focuses on ensuring the highest standards of quality in IOL's academic programs and services. This policy outlines the institution's commitment to continuous improvement, monitoring, and evaluation of its educational offerings. It establishes processes and procedures for curriculum development, assessment and evaluation, faculty qualifications and development, student support services, and overall institutional effectiveness. The policy aims to provide a framework for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education delivered by IOL.

### **IOL Academic Integrity Policy**

The IOL Academic Integrity Policy is designed to promote and uphold academic honesty and integrity among students, faculty, and staff. This policy provides guidelines and expectations for ethical conduct in academic work, including research, assignments, examinations, and collaborative projects. It outlines the consequences of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of data, and emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of academic integrity within the institution. The policy may include procedures for educating students on academic integrity, investigating and addressing instances of misconduct, and implementing appropriate disciplinary measures.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure**

The Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure specifies the actions and processes to be followed when addressing cases of academic misconduct within IOL. This policy provides a framework for investigating and adjudicating allegations of academic misconduct, ensuring fair and consistent treatment of all parties involved. It outlines the types of misconduct covered, the reporting mechanisms, and the steps to be taken for investigation, disciplinary actions, and appeals. The policy aims to maintain academic integrity, protect the rights of all parties, and ensure the appropriate resolution of academic misconduct cases. These policies collectively demonstrate IOL's commitment to maintaining high-quality education, upholding academic integrity, and addressing instances of academic misconduct. By having these policies in place, IOL establishes clear expectations, processes, and consequences related to quality assurance and ethical conduct, fostering a conducive and trustworthy learning environment for its students and academic community

While UNAM the following policies were approved and disseminated within the institution during the period under review

1. Academic Integrity

promoting ethical scholarship and original academic writing among students and researchers, and prevention of academic misconduct and dishonesty;

2. Short Course Policy

promoting the development and delivery of short courses and short training programmes at the University of Namibia assisting with generating 3<sup>rd</sup> stream income.

## **2.5 KPA 5: Quality Promotion**

NAMCOL Quality Assurance (QA) awareness is an initiative aimed at promoting quality and raising awareness among staff on quality assurance matters. A QA awareness day was held during the period under review with the aim of creating awareness among the NAMCOL Community and to ensure that all staff members understand and appreciate the importance of quality and its application in daily work performance.

Furthermore, the College carried series of initiatives to capacitate staff by sharing QA information and publishing articles in the institutional monthly eNEWS. Equally, the institution hosted several staff Capacities Professional Development (CPD) sessions. In addition, a QA re-treat was hosted by the College to provide to a platform where directorates and regional offices converge to discuss and share experiences in order to enhance continuous quality improvement.

To enhance the governance and academic oversight of IOL, the institution recognizes the need to establish an Advisory Board (AB) consisting of appropriate expertise. This AB would provide guidance, strategic direction, and oversight for the academic enterprise of IOL. Once IOL has identified and selected suitable individuals to serve on the advisory board, the next step would be to seek approval from the Executive Committee (EXCO) of the institution. In order to ensure the recognition and credibility of its qualifications, IOL reviewed seven (7) of its qualifications for registration with the Namibia Qualification Authority (NQA). IOL reviewed the curriculum and assessment methods of each qualification, ensuring that they meet the desired learning outcomes and assessment criteria set by the NQA. This involve revising course materials, updating assessment strategies, or incorporating industry-relevant components into the qualifications. IOL contracts subject matter experts responsible for

evaluating each qualification against the NQA's registration criteria and ensuring that the qualifications meet the required standards.

The Centre (CILT) promoted quality assurance and enhancement in online learning through the following strategies:

- Development of online teaching guidelines with quality standards, to inform on minimum standards to be met;
- Conduct training on the enhancement and monitoring of quality in blended and online courses;
- Implementation of quality course development procedures through team-based course content development approaches;
- Digitalisation of course learning materials, to enable regular and timely update of course content;
- Support for the institution's programme accreditation of new curriculum through the creation of videos capturing status of institutional teaching sites/facilities for virtual site viewing.

## 2.6 KPA 6: Stakeholders Engagement Plan

During the period under review, the College developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the 2022 academic year. Also, several consultative sessions were held with key stakeholders through local regional councils' structures with the aim of sensitizing them of NAMCOL's programmes and services.

IOL has developed a system of community engagement that is appropriate to an educational institution and completely separated from that of the Trustco Group Holding (TGH). IOL have

done a number of Corporate Social Investment (CSI) with the group, but have engaged in several books' donations to schools Book donations: In addition to the CSI's, IOL continue offering book donations to schools as a separate initiative. This is aligned with the institution's objectives, promoting literacy and supporting educational resources for students. IOL coordinate with the schools to identify their specific needs and ensure the donated books are relevant and beneficial not only to



Figure 2: Book donations

leaners but also as reference books for teacher studying at higher education institutions

Stakeholder engagement is of strategic importance at the University of Namibia and form part of the key KPAs of the strategic and management plans. CILT contributed towards stakeholder engagement through:

- Implementation of the institutional Community Engagement Policy and compliance with the Stakeholder Engagement Policy;
- Held the UNAM Industry partners engagement workshop on 16 November 2022;
- Implemented an online course for students on work readiness, to prepare students for industry and enhance their employability;
- Facilitated Online Student Engagement Workshop Sessions: 03 – 07 October 2022;
- Initiated and signed MOUs with several stakeholders and partners for enhanced engagements;
- CILT shared academic and institutional restructuring experiences and strategies in respect of ODL with the University of Botswana during 22 – 23 May 2023.

### **3. New Innovations**

IOL has taken a proactive step by contracting freelancers to act as ambassadors to promote the quality of IOL qualifications. This initiative not only helps in promoting the institution but also contributes to job creation in a struggling economy. By contracting freelancers as ambassadors, IOL demonstrates its commitment to engaging and supporting individuals in the struggling economy. This approach not only promotes IOL, but also contributes to job creation, skills development, and overall economic well-being.

### **4. Challenges**

The College operates on a limited budget hence in some cases planned activities have to be postponed due to budgetary constraints.

The following were some of the challenges over the reporting period:

### **5. Conclusion**

Despite the tight budget, the College made some noticeable progress in contributing to the development and delivery of quality distance education programmes.

The year in review at ODL institutions in Namibia was monumental that institutions successfully implemented their strategic objectives despite a number of challenges. transformed its curricula across all disciplines, for which most of the programmes were accredited and implemented. CILT played a key role in the implementation of the Core Semester of the transformed curriculum that focused on readying students for university learning and developing their generic 21<sup>st</sup> century and learning skills. CILT solidified itself through the publicity of its new mandate, engagement with internal and external stakeholders, and through awareness campaigns, which all resulted in valuable learning experiences that can be shared with other ODL stakeholders who may seek to restructure in a similar manner, as has been observed by the University of Botswana. The successful hosting of the DEASA Conference at NUST in Windhoek, Namibia is one of the highlights of the period under review, preparations towards which CILT and UNAM played a key role in a number of ways.

Nationally, ODL needs to embrace new developments in learning technologies and the continuing growth in blended and online learning. Existing policies would need to be revised and greater collaboration among institutions is ideal to promote learning and teaching innovations in the ODL sector.