

# DEASA COUNTRY REPORT FOR NAMIBIA

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AGYW</b>	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
<b>BOU</b>	Botswana Open University
<b>CDT</b>	Courseware Development Team
<b>CODeL</b>	Centre for Open, Distance and eLearning
<b>COL</b>	Commonwealth of Learning
<b>COLL</b>	Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning
<b>CQAC</b>	Common Quality Assurance Criteria
<b>DEASA</b>	Distance Education Association of Southern Africa
<b>DEATA</b>	Distance Education Association of Tanzania
<b>DREAMS</b>	Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NAMCOL</b>	Namibian College of Open Learning
<b>NOLNet</b>	Namibian Open Learning Network Trust
<b>NSSCO</b>	Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary
<b>NUST</b>	Namibia University of Science and Technology
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
<b>ODL</b>	Open and Distance Learning
<b>OUM</b>	Open University of Mauritius
<b>UNAM</b>	University of Namibia
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance



# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) is a vibrant organisation that strives to become the regional powerhouse in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Its major goal is to enable members to share information, collaborate in obtaining and developing quality distance education courses in identified areas and organize relevant professional development activities. This DEASA report is represented by several Open and Distance Learning (ODL) providers in Namibia. These are the: Namibian College of Open Learning (**NAMCOL**); Centre for Open, Distance and eLearning, University of Namibia (**UNAM-CODEL**), Centre for Open and Lifelong Learning and Namibia University of Science and Technology (**NUST-COLL**) under the umbrella of the National ODL Network Trust, the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (**NOLNet**).

## 2. DEASA KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

### 2.1 Research Activities

The COLL Director as the Country Representative and EXCO member for DEASA, attended DEASA and Distance Education Association of Tanzania (DEATA) Joint Conference in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania under the theme: Agenda 2030 and Open and Distance Learning: Making transformation happen, from 25 – 27 September 2019.

COLL was well represented at the 4th NOLNet ODL Conference, hosted at NUST under the Theme: The Role of Open, Distance and eLearning in the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR). Fourteen (14) staff members from COLL attended the Conference as well as three Regional Coordinators from the Regions. COLL received the National ODL Award for best representation and most papers presented at the Conference amongst all represented ODL Institutions.

Staff members in CODEL participated in the following research activities in the form of conference papers presented at two conferences, one international and one local conference during 2019. The two conferences were the PCF9 and the National ODL Conference in Namibia.

Anderson, F. (September, 2019). The Blurred Line Between Mathematical Anxiety and Dyscalculia and the impact on Adult Learners' Academic Performance: A Case Study for Namibia Open and Distance Learning. A paper presented at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum 9 (PCF9), Edinburgh, Scotland.

Anderson, F., Besser, M., Bock, J. & Hautemo, A. (October, 2019). An investigation into the development of critical thinking competencies in the virtual learning environment – A case study of Namibia public ODL institutions. A paper presented at the 4th Open and Distance Learning Conference of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet), Windhoek.

Haiping, E., Beukes-Amiss, M. & Uunona, G. (September, 2019). Monitoring and Reflecting on the Impact of Quality Assurance Interventions through Action Research: A Case of CODEL at the University of Namibia. A paper presented at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum 9 (PCF9), Edinburgh, Scotland.

Haiping, E., Kaereho, C. & Haihambo, C. (October, 2019). How Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can provide inclusive lifelong learning opportunities. A paper presented at the 4th Open and Distance Learning Conference of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet), Windhoek.

Haiping, E. & J. Olivier. (October, 2019). Paving the way towards success in terms of the 4th Industrial Revolution: the affordances of multimodal multiliteracies. A paper presented at the 4th Open and Distance Learning Conference of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet), Windhoek.

Haiping, E. & Shivoro, R. (October, 2019). Employees' Skills Profile in the 4th Industrial Revolution: Role of Higher Education in Graduate Preparation and Capacity Building for Re-skilling. A paper presented at the 4th Open and Distance Learning Conference of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet), Windhoek.

Uunona, G. (October, 2019). Ensuring quality of instructional materials for online learning developed using a rapid prototyping approach. A paper presented at the 4th Open and Distance Learning Conference of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust (NOLNet), Windhoek.

NAMCOL conducted a study on learner drop-out during the review period. The study focused exclusively on grades 10 & 12 learners who dropped out on subjects they have registered for at NAMCOL. By knowing the reasons that lead learners to drop out, NAMCOL can implement strategies to anticipate and reduce the number of subject dropouts.

Moreover, a research was conducted on the implementation of Notesmaster as an eLearning platform for secondary education. The study revealed that learners and tutors attached high value to the Notesmaster content and its potential contribution to improved performance in examinations. The quality of the notes and multimedia was highly valued, however limited or lack of access to internet was highlighted by both learners and tutors as an obstacle to access audio and video that requires much data.

During the review period, two articles were published by the two staff members in the African Educational Research Journal, an international journal that publishes widely in the area of education.

NOLNet held its 4th ODL conference under the theme, "The Role of Open, Distance and eLearning in the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR)" in October 2019. Among the main speakers was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth of Learning, Professor Ashar Kanwar. At least 130 delegates attended the conference, with twenty-six research papers on ODL having been presented by local and international scholars. The papers presented will be published in the conference proceedings in January 2020.

Furthermore, NOLNet awarded grants to two research teams that conducted joint investigations in the area of Quality Assurance and Student Support respectively. The teams presented the findings of the studies to the institutions where the studies focused on. Comprehensive research papers were subsequently submitted to the NOLNet Research Committee for possible publication.

## 2.2 Capacity Building

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One (1) staff member at COLL was awarded a Masters's degree during the year under review, while six (6) staff members are registered for their Master's degrees, and four staff members are busy reading for their Doctorate. Furthermore, three staff members are also enrolled for the Postgraduate Diploma in Open School Operation and Management (PDOSOM), which is a NQF Level 8 fully online course offered by NAMCOL. The COLL Secretary received the NUST Secretary Award for Best Newcomer as first runner up.

### **a) Strengthening of Learning Support and Assessment Strategies**

CODEL held a Commonwealth of Learning (COL) sponsored workshop on Strengthening of Learning Support and Assessment Strategies for various internal stakeholders directly responsible for this between, 25 February – 1 March 2019. The workshop addressed evaluation strategies to stimulate and guide competence development, student support services, introduced new tools to manage and enhance assessment methodologies with an emphasis to train and upskill all workshop participants in diversified assessment strategies.

### **b) Capacity Building for Online Course Development and Delivery**

Another COL sponsored capacity development workshop was the Capacity Building for Online Course Development and Delivery, which took place from 15 – 18 April 2019. The workshop introduced a new CODEL Course Template to ensure consistency in presentation and quality of UNAM online courses. The overall workshop goals were for lecturers to use this template to:

- Create a Moodle course with at least two units completed OR
- Revise two units of an existing Moodle course based on the new template OR
- Add two new units to an existing Moodle course

Twenty-Seven (27) lecturers, six (6) CODEL staff members and one (1) guest attended over the course of the workshop, though not all attended all sessions.

### **c) Integrating Employability attributes in Higher Education Institutions**

The Integrating Employability in Higher Education Institutions workshop was held from 03 – 07 June 2019. This project is the first implementation of a draft toolkit, to implement employability attributes of graduates into the curriculum at an institution. It was implemented as a learning experience COL in cooperation with (CODEL) and the Faculty of Law at the University of Namibia.

The project involved working with CODEL and the Faculty of Law to refine the employability attributes assessment questionnaire, mapping of the attributes to the curriculum and subsequent updating of module learning outcomes accordingly. Once adapted, the outcome of the project would be to better



prepare students for the world-of-work, thereby creating a long-term impact of reducing graduate unemployment.

NAMCOL recognizes that human resources development is paramount to the achievement of its mandate, hence the resolve to provide financial support to employees to advance their qualifications in order to contribute to improved performance at the workplace. Hence, during the review period, the College offered scholarships to the value of N\$ 520,418 to 21 full-time staff members to pursue their studies. Among the twenty-one (21) staff members there are Five (5) Doctoral candidates, six (6) Masters students, one (1) post graduate Diploma student, while eight (8) are taking undergraduate degree and one (1) is doing a diploma respectively. Moreover, two staff members took part in the Commonwealth Consortium meeting on the professionalization of youth work which was organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

#### **d) Promotion of ICT Skills transfer amongst partners**

NOLNet conducted a training on the use of Educational Technologies as from 26 - 27 June 2019 in Windhoek. Around twenty (20) participants attended the workshop. Those in attendance included instructional designers, material developers and course coordinator from partner institutions. The aim of the workshop was to enhance the competency, capability and potential of staff members to create their own digital resources for teaching, learning and assessment.

#### **e) Strengthen NOLNet Centre Resources**

In March 2019, NOLNet conducted a one-day training in quality assurance for NOLNet affiliated center staff in Erongo region. The main objective of the workshop was to strengthen capacity and sensitize officials on the NOLNet Quality Assurance Policy, prior to the review and implementation of the policy. Among those who attended the training were the designated officials at the NOLNet affiliated centres, namely librarians, archivists, office administrators, centre coordinators and Community Learning Development Centres' coordinators.

## 2.3 Partnership and Collaboration

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In terms of collaborative research and other innovations, NAMCOL approached the two public-funded institutions of higher learning and the International University of Management (IUM) for possible collaboration. The aim of the collaboration is to network and strengthen the relationship between the College and any other institution in the sector on areas of interest. Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) responded positively to the request and a draft MoU on possible areas of collaboration was developed.

Furthermore, NAMCOL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Office of the President to facilitate training on our various offerings. The College is also having discussions with the UNESCO Chairperson on Early Childhood Development (ECD) for the College of Education at UNISA to share content on ECD and explore ways of forging a more robust and sustainable collaborative partnership in ECD. The College is a member of the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium and signed an MoU with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning and the University of West Indies on the delivery of youth qualifications. Moreover, an MoU was also signed with the Commonwealth of Learning on the delivery of the Post Graduate Diploma in Open School Operations and Management.

In addition, NAMCOL has also agreed with the Open University of Mauritius (OUM) to offer the B. Ed (Hons) Primary Education (Top-Up), B. Ed (Hons) Early Childhood Education and Care, and some employability skills short courses. The agreement will be signed as soon as the decision has been ratified by the OUM Board.

Besides the partnership made by NAMCOL the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) also signed a Contribution Agreement (CA), to provide support to the University of Namibia, through CODEL to pilot Phase II of the Higher Education Integrated Model in 2018. The Implementation of Phase III of the Higher Education Integrated Model continued in 2019.

### **This phase included:**

- Development, Adoption and Implementation of an Institutional ODeL Policy, 22 February 2019
- Strengthening of Learner Support and Assessment Strategies, 25 February – 01 March 2019
- Capacity building for Online Course Development and Delivery, 15-18 April 2019
- Employability Readiness Assessment and Mapping of LLB Programme, 3-7 June 2019

In addition, North-West University (NWU) signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with UNAM, to establish a framework within which co-operation may develop between the two institutions through CODEL.

**The SLA between the two institutions included activities such as: -**

- Joint research and joint research chairs, co-hosted by the Parties;
- Reciprocal participation in doctoral and research master's programmes by staff members of the respective institutions, including joint Masters and PhD research degree programmes;
- Exchange of publications, academic materials and other information;
- Joint quality assurance and benchmarking;
- Exchanges of students and academic staff;
- Seminars, conferences and public lectures; and
- Assistance in capacity building at both Universities;

As part of the SLA activities, CODEL invited Professor J.A.K. Olivier to visit the University of Namibia from 1-2 April 2019. The visit included collaboration and research opportunities between the University of Namibia and the North-West University on Multimodal Learning, OERs and Self-Directed Learning. His visit also involved discussions with regard to inter-institutional capacity building and training opportunities in terms of his role as UNESCO Chair for this project. After Prof Olivier's visit, Mr Haipinge, our Deputy Director: eLearning was fully sponsored for a visit to NWU.

## 2.4 Policy Development and Facilitation

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The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) sponsored the development, adoption and implementation of an institutional ODeL Policy, 20 – 22 February, 2019. COL appointed Prof. Mpine Makoe from UNISA as a Consultant to assist CODEL to develop an institutional ODeL policy. Prof. Makoe's active participation and contributions during this workshop were crucial and yielded a lot of added value regarding the regional status in this regard.

The Policy intends to guide the University of Namibia on the development, planning, and implementation of Open, Distance and eLearning. It is aimed at providing the regulatory framework for the activities and developments falling under Open, Distance and eLearning. The ODeL Policy Validation Workshop was held on the 25th of June 2019 as an important final step with all CODEL staff members, to ensure that the policy objectives and requirements were met and to declare that the policy is officially accepted and ready for submission through the various institutional structures.

NOLNet successfully drafted the National OER Policy with the assistance and support from COL. The NOLNet Board endorsed the policy and it will be presented to the Cabinet through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. In addition, NAMCOL successfully developed the ICT Charter and Governance Framework as well as the Records Management Policy during the review period.

## 2.5 Quality Promotion

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The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) continued to contribute significantly to the production of quality learning material for the basic education sector. Textbooks for the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) level curriculum were developed and accepted by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture for use in schools. These include Entrepreneurship, Agricultural Science, Development Studies, Chemistry, Physics, English, Biology, Business Studies, Economics and Geography.

The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) and the Botswana Open University signed a Common Quality Assurance Criteria (CQAC) to facilitate the internal and external audit processes at both institutions. An internal quality assurance audit was conducted and a report compiled that outlined conformities and non-conformities to the common quality criteria developed jointly by NAMCOL and BOU. This report will be submitted to BOU in the next reporting period for consideration in their planning to conduct the next external audit in 2020.

Through collaboration linkages with COL, CODEL developed an Instrument for Measuring Adherence to Quality Standards for each of the Sections in CODEL, involving all processes and activities of each of the Sections in CODEL. The instrument has been developed to identify performance measurement indicators of an instrument that measures effectiveness of all its quality processes. In essence, sections developed their quality measures and submitted it to a COL Quality Assurance Consultant to make recommendations. As per his recommendations changes were incorporated and all Sections distributed the instrument to their respective staff members to complete. Each section compiled a report in the form of a Self-Improvement Plan (SIP) on the findings and submitted it to the Director's office. Now monitoring and evaluation must continue to ensure all SIP suggestions are implemented.

## 2.6 Stakeholders Engagement Plan

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The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) has realized the need to strengthen its advocacy strategy by developing an annual stakeholders' engagement plan. A stakeholders' engagement plan details the College's advocacy activities and creates a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and make an effective use of the various platforms and publications.

### 3. NEW INNOVATIONS

#### **The following innovations were implemented during the year under review:**

COLL's involvement in the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) Project signifies its commitment to Youth Empowerment, especially in empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). Together with the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences, the Centre is a key stakeholder in this Project through the COLL Tsumeb Regional Centre, with the assistance of Project Hope in the Oshikoto Region. The Project aims to:

1. Mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) through education.
2. Stimulate interest and strengthen knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
3. Empower AGYW to build resilience and confidence and the determination to take their future in their own hands.
4. Create a STEM eLearning Study Hub at the COLL Tsumeb Regional Centre, called safe space for these young girls.

Education 4.0 and 4IR aims to empower educators to become innovators, critical thinkers, and develop entrepreneurial skills. The Courseware Development Team (CDT) at NUST started with a new initiative whereby each COLL staff member is empowered to do instructional design, quality assurance and to get a study guide print-ready. The empowerment of staff members is in line with the University's theme, and cascading of skills and knowledge are encouraged for efficiency and effectiveness at the Centre.

COLL and the Faculty of Human Sciences at NUST worked together to develop a fully online course, "Sustainability and Development," which is an Institutional Core Course that will be offered on the eLearning mode of study only as from 2020 to all NUST students.

The COLL team again participated in the annual Windhoek Industrial and Agricultural Show. The Centre used iPads with the focus on showcasing and creating awareness of Gamification in Education to emphasize the use of technology in creating 21st Century Skills amongst students.

Through COLL, NUST will soon open its first Satellite Campus in Lüderitz. Development is well underway with the opening of the first phase of the Campus slated for the second half of the 2020 academic year.

The Namibian College of Open Learning continued to use the Short Message Service (SMS) facility to enhance support to learners. The SMS facility remains one of the most useful means of communication in the dissemination of all sorts of information to learners and other stakeholders. For the period under review, 249 474 messages were disseminated on the SMS platform, of which 36 439 were inbound messages and 213 035 were outbound.

### 3.1 Online Ticketing

CODeL implemented an online ticketing system using osTicket to streamline the support of ODL students with regards to various ODL learning needs. The online ticketing system has proven particularly useful in addressing student queries on issues such as Moodle course enrollments, assignment submissions, examinations and assessment feedback. The tool is also used for booking of the CODeL virtual meeting solution, Zoom used throughout the entire University for various strategic and statutory meetings.

The screenshot shows the 'UNAM Online Support' web interface. At the top left is the UNAM logo and 'UNAM Online Support' text. At the top right, it says 'Guest User | Sign in'. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Support Center Home', 'Open a New Ticket', and 'Check Ticket Status'. The main heading is 'Open a New Ticket' with the instruction 'Please fill in the form below to open a new ticket.' The form is divided into two sections: 'Contact Information' and 'Help Topic'. The 'Contact Information' section includes fields for 'Email Address \*', 'Full Name \*', and 'Phone Number' (with a separate 'Ext.' field). The 'Help Topic' section features a dropdown menu with options: 'Missing Module on Moodle', 'Pending Marks 2018', 'Missing Guide or Notes on Moodle', 'Distance Edu Assignments', and 'Venues and Video Conferencing'. Below the dropdown are 'Create Ticket', 'Reset', and 'Cancel' buttons. At the bottom, there is a copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2019 CODeL Online Support - All rights reserved.' and a 'powered by osTicket' logo.

### 3.2 Online Orientation:

Due to the vast nature of the University of Namibia as far as the distribution of CODEL Centres across the country are concerned, face-to-face orientation have proven a challenge. CODEL therefore introduced online orientation to support students more effectively in using our Moodle VLE.

**Distance Student Orientation**

This resource contains video tutorials about the various aspects of your online experience on the Moodle Learning Management System.

### 1. Overview

This resource contains video tutorials about the various aspects of your online experience on the Moodle Learning Management System.

Please go through this tutorial before you engage in any activity. The **Table of Contents on your right** helps you to locate specific topics for which you need support or orientation. Clicking on the topic in the table of contents directs you to the video tutorial.

The same tutorial videos are located in every course for your convenience and easy reference and access.

We wish you a successful semester!

**Tags:** [orientation overview](#)

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## 4. CHALLENGES

With the introduction of online assessment, CODEL experienced various challenges due to contextual factors and change management issues (adaptation to change).

- a. Connectivity: many students still experienced challenges regarding access to the Internet, which hampered the process of online submission of assignments even though the University does avail 3G cards to all registered students at the University, including distance and online mode students.
- b. Digital literacy: students also experienced challenges when submitting their assignments online, due to limitations in their computer skills. Issues such as uploading of wrong files, submission of assignments on wrong courses and failure to meet deadlines have been common.
- c. Policy Framework: the introduction on new innovations like the use of a plagiarism checker required the revision of the existing policy on Academic Integrity to be revised to accommodate the changes introduced.
- d. Training: the introduction of online assessment necessitated the need for all lecturers and students to be trained in the use of Moodle LMS. This was particularly challenging due to the fact that UNAM has various campuses across the country, while the CODEL staff were located at the main Campus in Windhoek. Limited funding made the timely training of lecturers a big challenge



## 5. CONCLUSION

Open and Distance Learning has gone through major transformations over recent years globally and Namibia is no exception. The integration of ICTs to ODL has negated the significance of distance by enabling student-student and student-educator interaction, regardless of location. In fact, the “D” in ODL could be transformed from “Distance” to “Distributed” (Open and Distributed Learning) due to the impact of technology, especially the Internet. Namibia is therefore embracing these changes through the ODL institutions by transforming itself into a society that promotes distributed learning, resulting in narrowing the gap in the quality of learning between residential and distance students. Therefore, introducing new innovations and studying their impact on teaching, learning and administration of ODL has been found to be crucial in Namibia. The lessons learned from the activities of 2019, and the challenges experienced would inform strategic planning and initiatives for the 2020 academic year, where we look to with greater optimism and anticipation.







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