



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

COUNTRY REPORT
2021-2023 | **AFRICA**



Namibia

Helping Commonwealth Member States and institutions use distance learning and technologies for expanding access to education and training.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is focused on adding value to African member countries' efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG4. It's supporting the governments and institutions of Africa in the use of appropriate, affordable technologies to improve and expand learning for sustainable development.

During its current plan (2021-2027), COL will:

- i) build on its expertise in ODL, OER and TEL to play a more influential role in national policy development and implementation;
- ii) invest in innovations and research;
- iii) support the digital transformation of institutions and organisations;
- iv) promote gender equality; and
- v) implement a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan.

COL's work is organised into two sectors — Education and Skills — with Gender Equality and Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) as cross-cutting initiatives.

The Education sector supports formal education from secondary to tertiary levels across the Commonwealth, particularly in the small states in Africa (Botswana, The Gambia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles) and has four initiatives: Open Schooling; Teacher Education; Higher Education and the Virtual University for Small States of The Commonwealth (VUSSC).

The Skills sector supports formal, non-formal and informal education and training to equip learners for livelihoods and has three initiatives: Skills for Work (SfW); Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) and GIRLS Inspire.

The work in these sectors complements the three pathways of change COL is focusing on in achieving impact for each African member country. These are:

1. Building National Resilience
2. Strengthening Institutions
3. Improving Lives and Livelihoods.

INTRODUCTION

Namibia is a large country with a population of over 2.5 million ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

COL's work in Namibia is in the areas of open schooling and higher education. It is part of the VUSSC network and benefits from programmes offered by the Southern African Development Community's Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE), COL's regional centre. Learners from Namibia are also participating in COL's free, open online courses and benefitting from other available resources.

PARTNERS

COL's partners in Namibia include:

- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
- Khomas Regional Directorate
- Namibia Qualifications Authority
- Namibian Open Learning Network Trust
- Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL)
- Namibia University of Science and Technology
- University of Namibia (UNAM)

KEY CONTACTS

COL FOCAL POINT

Mr Gerard N. Vries
Deputy Executive Director for
Lifelong Learning, Arts and
Culture
Ministry of Education, Arts and
Culture

COL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN JULY 2021 - JANUARY 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- A strategy for the digitisation of learning resources, focusing on climate-responsive sustainable livelihoods and food security, has been developed.
- 2,052 women and girls have been trained.

BUILDING NATIONAL RESILIENCE

COL is working with governments to use gender-responsive ODL policies and strategies for increasing equitable access to quality learning.

Sixty-four (64) Government staff/officials/policymakers were trained/sensitised on gender equality, Gender Based Violence (GBV), gender-sensitive practices, and grass roots advocacy.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

COL is supporting partner institutions to strengthen its ODL systems and capacities for providing quality education and training.

In response to NAMCOL's request for COL's support for the transition of NAMCOL into an open university. COL commissioned an expert to conduct an in-depth study to understand the current status and to make recommendations for the transition. The final report was shared with the Director NAMCOL in August 2021.

31 faculty staff from NAMCOL enrolled (16F/15M) in the "Developing and Teaching Online" and 49 enrolled in "Designing and Developing Online Assessments" courses.

NAMCOL started with the pilot of "Introduction to Open Educational Resources (IOER)" course with 93 participants in September 2021. Participants enrolled include part-time staff responsible for online content development for AS Level subjects on NotesMaster as well as Senior Education Officers from the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), teachers and a couple of NAMCOL Staff members. The course was offered as the first part of the capacity-building training for content developers.

The Rapid Development Process Workshop for the University of Namibia (UNAM) took place online in October 2021. 28 UNAM staff drawn from various Faculties and Campuses from across ten regional towns were trained in rapid online course design and development. These included Faculties and Schools of Education, Nursing, Crop Science, Computing, Engineering, and a range of subjects. Further training was conducted by UNAM CILT for ten staff from the International University of Management (IUM) and ten staff from NAMCOL in March 2022.

NAMCOL completed 23 course modules in Youth Work.

49 tutors trained in online assessment [Jan 2022].

NAMCOL developed Open Educational Resources (OER) for Technical & Vocational Education Training by organising a workshop on open content development using OER, where 28 (10M/28F) instructors participated. [Nov 2022]

Seven (6M/1F) TVET course team members at NAMCOL participated in a virtual training session on Educational Technologies, Moodle and OER. [Jan 2023]

NAMCOL revised 14 courses as per the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary curriculum. [Jan 2023]

Teachers from Namibia participated in the COL MOOC on inclusive teaching and learning (Sep 2022).

14 (6F/8M) institutional staff participated in a three-day training workshop organised by NAMCOL and COL on the dissemination of research findings on the status of the implementation of blended TVET, validating a competency framework and a standard for a blended TVET teacher, as well as providing input for the design of a Toolkit for blended TVET. [Mar 2023]

COL's GIRLS Inspire initiative is supporting its partners with capacity building in various areas. Activities include:

- International Women's Day 2022 celebration took place at Khomas Regional Directorate, and 25 (2M/23F) staff members at the regional office participated.
- Pre-conference workshop took place at PCF10 with 21 (9m, 12f) participants from ten countries (Bangladesh, Canada, India, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda). 15 attended in person and six joined online. The workshop's objective was to develop a Strategy for Digitization of Learning Resources focusing on Climate and Environmentally Responsive Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security through a collective discussion on: 1) Improving learning resources using COL's quality standards and aligning it to climate change and environmental protection; 2) Digitisation of the improved learning resources.; 3) Scaling up the use of digitised learning resources for sustainable livelihood and food security. [Sep 2022]

COL, in collaboration with NAMCOL, conducted a workshop to validate the competency framework and standard for a blended TVET trainer; developing learning outcomes for COL's exemplar course for a blended TVET trainer, and benchmarking for the establishment and operationalisation of ODeL centres. The workshop was attended by 11 (6M/5F) key TVET trainers from six African countries (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, and Zambia,). [Apr 2023]

REGIONAL CENTRE: SADC-CDE

NAMCOL, in collaboration with SADC-CDE, developed four short courses for staff and student capacity building: Introduction to OER; Learning Design; Facilitating Online Learning; Moodle Orientation. 15 (F12M3) NAMCOL staff completed the Learning Design for Online Course Development (LDOCD) course piloted from July - Sept 2021. 24 (F17M7) completed the Introduction to Open Educational Resources (IOER) course piloted from September-October 2021.

26 senior officials comprising representatives from Universities participated in the high-level workshop on developing effective OER policies for the SADC region from 20-21 June 2022 in Gaborone.

In February 2022, a seminar was organised on "The Future of open and distance e-learning (ODEL) in higher education institutions in the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities" to sensitise the institution staff at 16 SADC member states (including 11 Commonwealth countries).

IMPROVING LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

COL continues to provide learners, especially from disadvantaged groups, access to learning and resources for improved livelihoods.

COL's GIRLS Inspire initiative is operational in Namibia and is supporting Khomas Regional Directorate in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment through skills development for livelihoods and community sensitisation. To date, a total of 2,052 women and girls have been trained; 10 have accessed financial resources such as loans; and 3,767 Community members have been reached through advocacy events conducted. Activities include:

- Needs assessment report submitted showing a range of courses in which prospective learners are interested and will be used for developing and identifying learning resources. [Nov 2021]
- Advocacy sessions were held in 7 districts of the Khomas Region. [Mar 2022]
- 612 participants trained in agriculture, ICT, entrepreneurship and vocational skills, including tailoring, beads-making, paper flowers and décor. [Jul2022]
- Saving schemes were created, allowing 320 women and girls to access loans. [Jul 2022]
- 11 community events/dialogues and awareness-raising campaigns on preventing Gender-Based Violence, Health & Social Rights and bringing girls back to school were conducted
- Seven partnerships were established to assist with the placement of interns, linkages for employment, financial support, mentorship and counselling and other services. [Jan 2023]
- With the support of COL's partner, Khomas Directorate, ten women accessed credit/financial resources and linked 42 (18m, 24f) learners to farm inputs and agricultural technology from government extension. [Apr 2023]

As a result of COL's support in 2021, NAMCOL has offered nine courses as part of the Bachelor of Arts in Youth and Community Development (BA:YCD) – Online. To date, 142 learners (61M/81F) have enrolled in these courses.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

H.V. Murangi from NAMCOL participated in the **High-Level Roundtable for Vice Chancellors & Heads of ODL Institutions** from 29-30 July 2022 in Penang, Malaysia.

Done' Brinkman from UNAM and Venessa Karises from NAMCOL were both invited to participate in the **4th Pan-Commonwealth Training Programme on Women and Leadership in ODL** in August 2022, in Penang, Malaysia, including an online workshop earlier in the year. The workshop theme was 'Women Leaders: Shaping the future for a sustainable world' with three sub-themes-Leadership, ICTs and Climate Change.

COL's Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning is held triennially and is co-hosted with different partners in different regions of the Commonwealth. Nine delegates from Namibia registered for the **Tenth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF10)**, the first-ever hybrid Forum held in Calgary, Canada from 14-16 September 2022. Seven were sponsored by COL. The Honourable Faustina Namutenya Caley, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture participated in the Ministerial Roundtable and chaired the keynote address for inspiring innovations. Other participants included: Maggy Beukes-Amiss, Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, University of Namibia; Mzingisi Gqwede, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; Ester Kapolo, Khomas Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture; Edwig Karipi, Namibian College of Open Learning; Samuel Kakambi Mafwila, University of Namibia; Martha Mosha, University of Namibia; Heroldt Vekaama Murangi, NAMCOL; and Hilikka O.N. Ndjaula SANUMARC, University of Namibia.

The **Regional Focal Points Meeting for Africa and Europe** was held in Seychelles from 20-21 February 2023. Official representatives from 20 Commonwealth countries in the region participated in the two-day meeting, including Mr Gerard N Vries.

PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE

Barriers to the Quality of Emergency Online Pedagogies in Higher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study from the University of Namibia <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/3989>

Report on the Regional Focal Points Meeting - Africa and Europe <http://hdl.handle.net/11599/5316>



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