

10 Namibia

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| COUNTRY CONTEXT STATISTICS | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Population: 2.3 million (2011) GDP per capita: US\$6 700 Human development index: 0.625 Unemployment: 51.2% (2008 est.) Key economic sectors: mining, agriculture, industry, tourism Principal exports: diamonds, copper, gold, zinc, lead, uranium, cattle, processed fish, karakul skins HIV and AIDS prevalence: 13.3% (2009 est.) Gross primary enrolment ratio: 107% (2008) Gross secondary enrolment ratio: 104% (2007) Gross tertiary enrolment ratio: 9% (2008)</p> |
| <small>Country context data were obtained from a variety of sources: CIA (2012), UNAIDS (2011), UNDP (2011), UNESCO (2011).</small> | |

Situated in the southwest of the Southern African region, the Republic of Namibia gained independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990 (SACMEQ 2012). The country has a population of over two million people, with 87.5 per cent of the population being Africans, and whites and mixed races comprising 6 and 6.5 per cent respectively (CIA 2012). The Namibian economy depends heavily on the mining and processing of minerals for export. Mining accounts for 8 per cent of GDP, but provides more than 50 per cent of foreign exchange earnings. Current GDP per capita stands at US\$6 700. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds and the country is the world's fourth-largest producer of uranium. Namibia also produces large quantities of zinc and is a small producer of gold and other minerals. The mining sector employs approximately 3 per cent of the population. Namibia normally imports about 50 per cent of its cereal requirements and in drought years food shortages are a major problem in rural areas. The Namibian economy is closely linked to South Africa with the Namibian dollar being on par with the South African rand (African Development Bank 2009).

Namibia is a politically stable and peaceful country with a progressive constitution. Since independence in 1990, a major political achievement has been the smooth transfer of power from one president to another. This bodes well for political stability and national development. However, high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality in income and land ownership remain key challenges which could threaten economic growth and national stability (African Development Bank 2009). At the social level, Namibian society is plagued by high HIV prevalence (about 19.7 per cent). Although the rate of infection has significantly slowed down in recent years, the number of orphans infected and/or affected currently stands at more than 120 000 (National Planning Commission 2007). This is believed to be taking a significant toll on the country's economic output and overall growth.

Higher education landscape

Higher education is provided by two public and two private institutions. The public institutions are the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia, and the private institutions are the International University of Management and the Headstart Mercy Montessori Teaching Training College. This section focuses on the landscape of public higher education in Namibia. Some of the factors that will be explored include the growth of higher education, regulatory policies, and recent developments, as well as institutional figures relating to institutional inputs and outputs.

Brief historical overview of higher education

Higher education was developed in Namibia in the early 1980s. Hitherto, students had to travel across the borders to attain tertiary education, with South Africa being the primary destination. In the mid-1980s, the academy was established, comprising university components, technical colleges and colleges for out-of-school training. After independence a special commission for higher education was created. It consisted of local and international representatives tasked with analysing and making recommendations concerning Namibia's higher education needs (SACMEQ 2012). The three components of the academy were transformed into two higher education institutions, a university and a polytechnic. The University of Namibia (UNAM) was established in 1993 and a year later the Polytechnic of Namibia was created from the technical school and the college for out-of-school training.

The polytechnic offers education and training for members of society who need more advanced technical skills. Although the polytechnic was established in 1994, it only became an independent institution in 1996 and subsequently established its Distance Education Centre to cater for students who could not afford to study full-time and who lived far from campus (Polytechnic of Namibia 2012). This institution collaborates with other major educational institutions and the Namibian College of Distance Education to offer distance programmes. It also works very closely with the University of Namibia.

After opening its doors to the first batch of students early in 1993, the University of Namibia set up a Centre for External Studies to provide off-campus students with the opportunity to obtain a higher education diploma or degree. The demand for tertiary education increased so rapidly that a second campus was established in the early 2000s. UNAM offers bachelors and masters degrees, as well as diplomas in the faculties of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Economics and Management Sciences, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Medical Health, and Natural Sciences (Kotecha 2008).

The Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) was sanctioned by the Namibian Public Service Commission in 1994. NAMCOL's main role is to enrol Namibians who do not gain entrance to the formal education system. It provides opportunities for students who could not complete their Grade 12 or who want to improve their marks to study and complete or improve their Grade 12 certificates. The majority of the students study via distance learning. The college also offers a certificate in education and development, designed to meet the staff development needs of district literacy organisations, agriculture and health workers, and community development workers in various ministries and NGOs.

National higher education policy context

Higher education in Namibia is primarily governed by the Namibian Higher Education Act of 2003 (Republic of Namibia 2003). The act aims to:

- regulate higher education;
- provide for the establishment, objectives, functions and composition of the National Council of Higher Education;
- provide funding for public higher education institutions; and
- provide for the establishment and functioning of a panel of enquiry into the affairs of higher education institutions.

Namibia has statutory bodies that help to regulate and ensure the quality of higher education in Namibia. The main one is the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) which was established by the Education Act of 2003, but was only officially launched in 2005 (National Council for Higher Education 2009). The objectives of the council are to:

- promote the establishment of a co-ordinated higher education system;
- advise on the allocation of money to public higher education institutes;
- promote access of students to higher education institutes and encourage quality assurance in higher education; and
- advise the Minister of Education on quality promotion and quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.

The Namibian Qualification Authority (NQA) is a statutory body established in 1996. The NQA is committed to promoting quality education and training in Namibian higher education institutions (Namibian Qualification Authority 2012). One of the objectives of the NQA is to ensure that every qualification meets the national standards.

The Advisory Council on Teachers Education and Training (ACTET) was established by the Teachers' Education Act of 2003 and is responsible for advising the Minister of Education (and others) about the training and education standards or qualifications in the teachers' education college.

Size and shape of higher education

Table 1 provides an overview of the types of higher education institutions and the proportional enrolment of students at each.

Table 1: Number and type of higher education institutions

| Type of higher education institutions | Number of institutions | Percentage of students enrolled |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Publicly-funded universities | 1 | 53 |
| Publicly-funded technical universities | 1 | 40 |
| Privately-funded accredited universities or colleges | 2 | 7 |
| Total | 4 | 100 |

Sources: SARUA MoE questionnaires (2011)

Almost all students in Namibia (93 per cent) are enrolled in public higher education institutions. With only two private providers of higher education, Namibia appears to have a very small private higher education sector. As in other SADC (and African) countries, the private sector accounts for a significantly low percentage of enrolments.

Demand for higher education

On average, more than 41 000 pupils complete high school in Namibia each year. During the academic year beginning in 2010, a total of 26 612 students applied for undergraduate studies at the two public institutions: 54.7 per cent applied to UNAM and 45.3 per cent to the polytechnic. Of the students who applied, about a third of the students qualified but could not be admitted owing to space constraints. Just over half (53 per cent) of the students who had applied to do their postgraduate studies in the two higher education institutions were accepted. The demand for postgraduate studies at the University of Namibia is particularly high, with 1 727 students applying and only 668 (38.8 per cent) being accepted. There is therefore a high demand for access to higher education, but the current institutional facilities do not permit all qualified students to enrol. Many Namibian students continue to cross the borders into South Africa and elsewhere to gain access to higher education.

Student profile

The data available indicate that the majority of the students who study at the higher education level in Namibia (91 per cent) are Namibian citizens, with an estimated 8.4 per cent of students coming from other SADC countries and only 0.6 per cent being international students from non-SADC countries.

With respect to the gender of students, Namibia and South Africa show some commonalities, with female students accounting for an increasing proportion of the student body. For the 2009/2010 academic year, 58.5 per cent of students enrolled at the two public universities in Namibia were women. Female students outnumber male students in all fields of study, except natural resources and tourism and agriculture.

Enrolment patterns

According to the questionnaires submitted by the two public universities, the 2009/2010 academic year witnessed a total student enrolment of 22 698 students in public higher education. Both UNAM and the polytechnic have a distance learning option to cater for students who cannot attend full-time contact studies. A total of 5 365 (23.6 per cent) of the students studying at public institutions make use of distance learning options.

At the undergraduate level, business, management and law account for by far the largest enrolment (51.2 per cent of all undergraduate students). This is followed by science, engineering and technology, which accounts for 14.4 per cent of the undergraduate enrolment. Science, engineering and technology and the humanities and social sciences together account for the largest numbers of students enrolled for postgraduate study.

Table 2: Student enrolment in Namibian public higher education by major field and level of study

| Major field of study | Number of students enrolled per level of study | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | Undergraduate | Postgraduate up to, but excluding masters | Masters | Doctoral | Post-doctoral | Other (e.g. short courses) |
| Agriculture | 498 | 113 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Business, management and law | 10 992 | 134 | 132 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| Education | 2 029 | 65 | 94 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| Health sciences | 1 368 | 44 | 32 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Humanities and social sciences | 2 461 | 116 | 101 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| Science, engineering and technology | 3 089 | 245 | 38 | 29 | 4 | 0 |
| Natural resources and tourism | 71 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| UNAM foundation | 121 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non degree/diploma courses | 57 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| External studies | 778 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 21 464 | 717 | 429 | 78 | 10 | 0 |

Sources: SARUA university questionnaires (2011)

Staff profile

The Namibian public universities reported having 858 academic and research staff, the majority of whom (93.4 per cent) are national citizens. Only 120 (6.6 per cent) of the academic and research staff were reported to be from outside Namibia (75 from other SADC countries, and 45 from countries outside the SADC region). In the previous SARUA study, 11 per cent (73 out of 660) of the staff members were from outside Namibia, so there appears to have been a decline in international staff members within the Namibian system. This is, however, commensurate with an overall

decrease in total staff numbers. Of the 600 administrative and management staff, only eight are not Namibian citizens.

Considering academic and research staff members specifically, the data show that 43.1 per cent of academic and research staff are female. In some fields of study the gender ratios are relatively even, but in others large disparities are evident. This is particularly the case for science, engineering and technology, which is dominated by men.

The majority of academic and research staff at UNAM have masters and doctorate degrees, but the majority of staff at the Polytechnic of Namibia have undergraduate degrees as their highest qualification.

National higher education outputs and alignment with policy imperatives

Graduate patterns

Consistent with the enrolment numbers, most qualifications awarded in the 2009/2010 academic year were in the field of business, management and law. At postgraduate level, 14 doctorate degrees were awarded in education. Although there is a massive difference in the enrolment of male and female students in the field of science, engineering and technology (SET), the gap seems to be decreasing and in fact 60 per cent of students who received their masters in SET-related fields were women. In the 2009/2010 academic year, a total of 3 526 undergraduate qualifications were awarded. At the postgraduate level, 480 students enrolled for masters degrees, but only 20 graduated. This reflects a possible bottle-neck, with limited throughput at postgraduate level. Only four doctoral degrees were awarded.

Quality assurance

In 2009 the final draft of the quality assurance framework for higher education in Namibia was released. The quality assurance system was developed to align with good practices from international case studies, taking into account the Namibian higher education context (National Council for Higher Education 2009). The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is responsible for quality assurance processes and works in collaboration with the Namibian Qualification Authority. The NCHE's main task regarding quality assurance is to:

- accredit, with the concurrence of the National Quality Authority, programmes of higher education provided at higher education institutions; and
- monitor the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.

Figure 1: Student enrolment in public higher education by gender and field of study

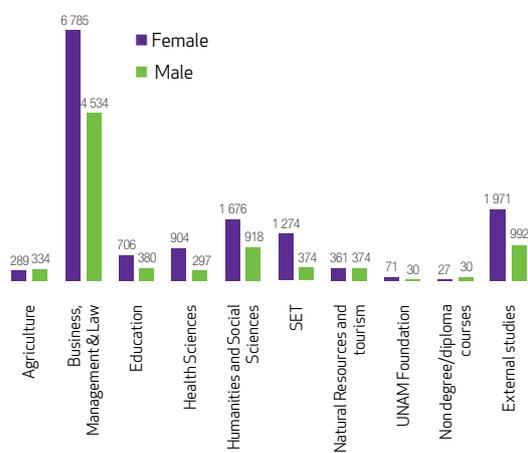
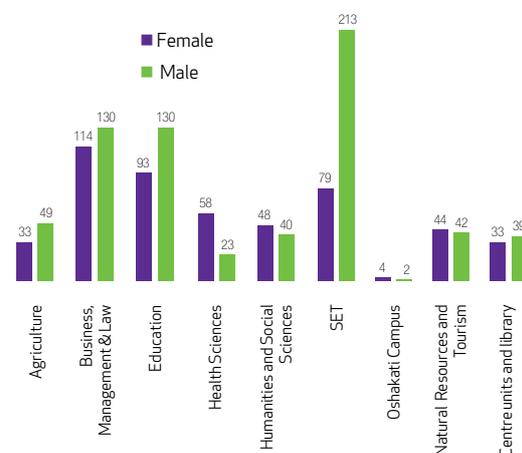


Figure 2: Academic/research staff by gender and major field of study



The Polytechnic of Namibia states that it conducts internal quality assurance procedures. The aim of quality assurance at the polytechnic is to enhance the effectiveness of the institution's core activities, which are teaching and learning, research and community engagement. It also coordinates and monitors the academic regulations, and regulates programmes, processes and the implementation of quality management systems both in academic departments and in support services. The quality assurance process further oversees the quality of academic programmes using the National Qualification Framework, and supervises departmental self-evaluation, programme accreditation and programme reviews.

Internal quality assurance at the University of Namibia is based on regular self-evaluation. An internal quality assurance management system is in place. The quality assurance office is responsible for liaising with stakeholders and develops internal quality management systems and procedures, which are internationally benchmarked to ensure constant and continuous improvement across all aspects of the university's operation in order to achieve the university mission, vision values and objectives.

Research output

The University of Namibia's research output continues to grow and the institution encourages research activity. In its approach to research funding, UNAM places emphasis on research proposals that cover areas that are of relevance to society. UNAM provides funding for academics to attend and present papers at national and international conferences and symposia (UNAM 2011). Young academics are urged to participate in research under the mentorship of senior researchers. As indicated in the table below, most of the research output is in the form of reports, theses, study guides, conferences papers and symposia. The university receives 66.4 per cent of its research funds from the government, 21 per cent from private individuals or trusts and only 2.4 per cent from international funders.

Table 3: Research output

| Category of research output | 2009 | 2010 |
|--|------|------|
| Peer-reviewed journal articles | 89 | 98 |
| Peer-reviewed books | 16 | 10 |
| Peer-reviewed book chapters | 28 | 29 |
| Patents | 5 | 7 |
| Reports, theses, study guides, conferences, papers, translations, symposia | 261 | 228 |

Sources: SARUA university questionnaires (2011), UNAM only. No data were available for 2008.

The polytechnic is not a research-focused institution at present and its records of research are sketchy.

Recent developments and debates in higher education

Recent debates in Namibian higher education concern the curricula and new academic programmes. The University of Namibia recently launched a new bachelor of accounting degree programme (New Era 2011), aimed at increasing the number of accountants in Namibia. Current data reveals that there are only 300 chartered accountants in the country. By opening this new programme, UNAM aims to increase the number of accountants being trained annually in Namibia, providing a strong foundation for those who desire to pursue careers in accounting and related fields. A new medical school campus of UNAM was opened in May 2011. There is a shortage of doctors and there is limited capacity to enrol students into medical school. The medical school is being developed in five phases and so far the first phase has been completed (Smith 2011). This phase consists mainly of an office building for academic and administrative staff, laboratories and the department of anatomy and physiology.

The Polytechnic of Namibia signed an agreement with the System Analysis Program Development University Alliance, aimed at enhancing academic training at the polytechnic (Smith 2011). This alliance will assist the polytechnic to integrate enterprise resources and planning technology into

its curricula, providing hands-on skills on the SAP system.

In the area of research development, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has recently established a research chair at the University of Namibia. The Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management Science holds the research chair, assisted by two co-chairs. The main duty of the chair is to serve as a bridging party between the WTO and stakeholders in member countries and to enhance their understanding of WTO policies and principles. The chair will also help the Namibian government, the business community and agricultural organisations to establish research-orientated policies. In 2012, the university is expected to introduce a postgraduate diploma and masters in international trade (University World News 2012).

Another recent development is the construction of student residence complexes at UNAM to accommodate 800 more students. The university can only accommodate 1 080 students and this is insufficient to meet the demand for student housing. UNAM entered into a partnership with Hanganeni Emona (Pty) Ltd to develop accommodation facilities for students at its main campus. This accommodation was due to be ready in 2011 (Sasman 2011).

Regionalisation

Through the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, Namibia has agreed to engage in collaboration and integration activities and processes with other higher education institutions in the region. However, according to the Ministry of Education's questionnaire response, the SADC protocol has not been specifically considered in national education planning, although the planning is in line with the aspirations of the protocol.

The University of Namibia is involved in a number of collaborative academic and research programmes with institutions based in other countries. The university reported that there are five teacher education projects focusing on capacity-building with the University of Oulu (Finland), University of Stellenbosch (South Africa), University of Zambia (Zambia) and the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). Institutional collaboration also includes research and institutional transformation, HIV/AIDS peer education, staff exchange, teaching, student practical work, module development with the University of Cape Town, and a medical student exchange with the University of Pretoria (both in South Africa). This collaboration includes the exchange of information, collaboration in research on ICT and fishery-related projects, supervision of postgraduate students, development of teaching resource materials relevant to the SADC region, training of medical students, skills transfer, practical training, and co-supervision of postgraduate students (UNAM).

At the Polytechnic of Namibia, in line with the SADC protocol, there is no difference in the tuition fees between the students from Namibia and other SADC countries and there is an allocated enrolment percentage reserved for students from SADC countries. The polytechnic is collaborating with SAP University Alliance to enhance academic training at the polytechnic (Smith 2010).

Conclusions

Although Namibia currently has four higher education institutions (two public and two private), the demand for places in higher education institutions outstrips available places, as evidenced by the increasing percentage of students who complete high school, but cannot study further. Expansion of the higher education sector is needed to accommodate this growing demand. Given that the private higher education sector currently appears to play a small role in Namibia, this might become the focus of greater attention in order to meet demand.

While the majority of students in the higher education system are Namibian citizens, there are relatively more students from the SADC region when compared to some other countries in the region. The number of staff members from other SADC countries is also relatively large compared to other countries in the region (excluding South Africa and the bigger higher education systems). At the regional level, the data findings reveal that Namibian universities report having good collaboration with other universities in the region. This collaboration provides a good base for further student and staff exchange.

The public higher education sector in Namibia, particularly at the undergraduate level, enrolls more women than men. Given the relatively large proportional difference, it is important for

Namibia to track these trends in order to understand why fewer young men are attending university. Despite the larger absolute numbers of female students, the stark gender disparity in science, engineering and technology requires attention. At the postgraduate level, UNAM enrolls the majority of students. The data seems to point towards a possible output problem at the postgraduate level as only a very small percentage of students complete their postgraduate degrees in the stipulated time. Most of the academic and research staff at UNAM have a masters or doctorate, so the university appears to have the human resources potential required to increase its knowledge output. This is potentially a very useful asset for higher education in Namibia.