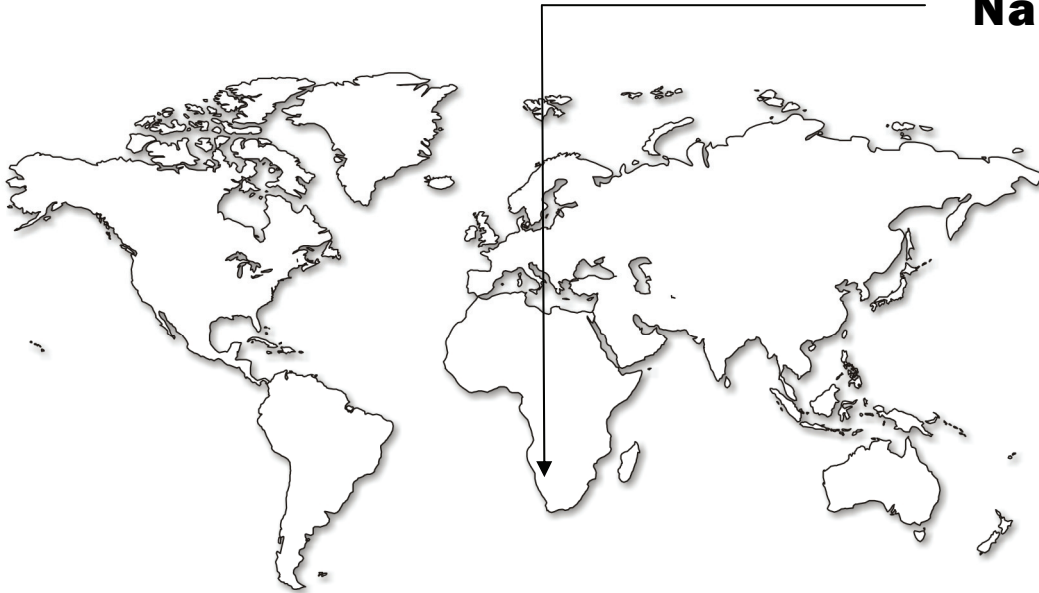# Namibia

Responding institutions:

National Library of Namibia, and Namibian Workers Information Association (NIWA)

Namibia is responding to the World Report for the second time, with the first report in 2003 and a lapse in 2005. This report refers to activities at 61 public library service points and in 9 university research libraries, 1 630 school libraries and 22 government-funded research libraries.

In September 2005, the level of Internet penetration in Namibia was estimated at 3.6% (*CIA World Factbook,* 2007 edition). Figures for levels of Internet access are less than 20% for users in public and school libraries, 81-100% in university libraries and 41-60% in government-funded research libraries.

There is very little coverage of local content and local languages on the Internet. The literacy rate is given as 81% (85% in the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*).

Access to the Internet for library users is free of charge in university and school libraries. The national library, which uses the government's Internet connection, does not charge user fees. Community libraries making use of dial-up connections charge a fee in order to pay for the connection. When the government Internet connection is extended to the regions, only institutions will be expected to pay a fee and not users.

As in the 2003 report, the state has made extra funding available for Internet access. The Tech/na! ICTs in Education Initiative envisages computers, literacy and access to all schools and libraries in Namibia within the next 15 years. Through the Educational Training Sector Improvement Plan (ETSIP), the state has provided funds for setting up EDUNET, an educational institution Internet service provider. The government is also negotiating with Telecom for a flat rate on bandwidth charges. The government has furthermore authorised the use of VSAT for educational institutions.

The library association is to some extent in favour of filtering information on library terminals. There is no widespread use of filtering software in libraries. Despite this answer, the reasons for using filtering software are indicated as being the protection of children and safeguarding the national ethos/culture and public morality. All libraries using the government Internet connection are restricted, but libraries using commercial Internet providers have no restriction. Filtering is only done by the government service provider and not at library level.

No anti-terror legislation has been passed in Namibia that would adversely affect the intellectual freedom of library users, and no violations of intellectual freedom have been reported by the respondents. Some incidents, however, are reported by third-party sources.

Libraries have been involved in programmes promoting HIV/Aids awareness and providing HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read. They have not been involved in initiatives designed to promote women's literacy. There are also no special programmes focusing

specifically on promoting women's access to social information and information on the economy, education, health and family planning.

The library association does not have a code of ethics but intends to adopt one within the next two years. Although neither the IFLA Internet Manifesto nor the IFLA Glasgow Declaration has been adopted, the library association intends to do so within the next two years. (In the 2003 response, the intent to adopt all three in two years' time was indicated.)

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

No anti-terror legislation has been passed in Namibia that would adversely affect the intellectual freedom of library users. The respondents have indicated that if such legislation were to be passed, it is not likely to impact on user privacy. They also do not feel that keeping user records affects the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

No incidents in the country in the last two years that adversely affect freedom of access to information or freedom of expression have been indicated.

According to the 2006 annual report of Reporters Without Borders, Namibia ensures a satisfactory degree of press freedom despite episodes of violence and harassment (http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=574). The BBC also considers Namibia one of the more media-friendly countries in Africa (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1063245.stm). Concerns for intellectual freedom and freedom of expression have, however, been reported in the international media, for example:

- MISA's condemnation of the former President's lawsuit against a newspaper (http://www.ifex.org/index.php/en/content/view/full/77332/)
- The SWAPO Party Youth League's calls for restriction of press freedoms (http://www.ifex.org/20fr/content/view/full/70988/)
- Concerns about the relationship between the media and the government (http://allafrica.com/stories/200705211185.html)

Other reported concerns include the announcement on 13 February 2006, a day before the opening of the fourth Parliament, that only photographers of the national news agency would be allowed on the floor during the opening ceremony (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/72201). The UN Special Reporter on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression wrote to the Namibian government in August 2006, requesting clarity about threatening remarks made by the President of SWAPO and Namibia's former President Sam Nujoma in reaction to demands for compensation from former combatants (http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Africa/Namibia). Parliamentarians' criticism that the independent media was being "disrespectful" to some SWAPO leaders was noted in February 2007 (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/81301).

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries in Namibia have been involved in programmes promoting HIV/Aids awareness. Aids corners and printed material on Aids are available in all libraries. The libraries have also been involved in programmes to provide HIV/Aids information to members of the community who are unable to read, and invite HIV counsellors and nurses to deliver talks.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries are not involved in initiatives for promoting women's literacy. Organisations in the communities (e.g. Sister Namibia) are involved in such activities. There are also no special programmes focusing specifically on promoting women's access to topics such as social information, the economy, education, health and family planning. Community libraries cater for the public in general and not for specific groups.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The IFLA Internet Manifesto has not been adopted by the library association, as they have been unaware of it. The Namibian library community intends to adopt the Manifesto within the next two years. (This intention was also expressed in the 2003 report.)

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The IFLA Glasgow Declaration was not adopted by the library association, as they were not aware of it. The respondents have indicated that the library association will study the Declaration and discuss it with the members, with the intention to adopt it within the next two years. (This is similar to the 2003 report.)
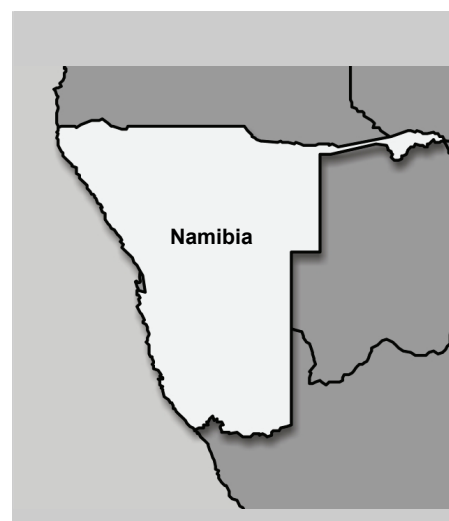
Ethics

The library association has not adopted a code of ethics. It has been dormant for some time and is only starting to revive. The Namibian library community, however, intends to adopt a code of ethics within the next two years (similar to the 2003 report).

Main indicators

Country name:	Namibia
Population:	2 055 080 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	San 1.2%, Caprivi 5.0% Otjiherero 7.9%, Kavango 9.7%, Nama/Damara 11.5%, Oshiwambo 48.5%, Tswana 0.3%, Afrikaans 11.4%, German 1.1%, English 1.9%, other European 0.5%, other African 0.4%, not stated 0.6% (2001 census)
Literacy:	85%
Literacy reported by respondents:	81%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
(https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

Namibia

Libraries and Internet access

Namibia contributed to the World Report series in 2003. The following section compares data and answers from 2007 with the 2003 IFLA/FAIFE World Report and adds context from the respondents' estimates, where possible.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	61
Estimated number of school libraries:	1 630
Estimated number of university libraries:	9
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	22
Source of these numbers:	Head of Community Library Services; libraries, resource and information centres; and community learning and development centres (CLDCs)

Internet access

Population online**:	75 000 Internet users as of Sept. 2005 (3.6%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20% (2003: 21-40%)
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	81-100%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	41-60%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Very little
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Very little
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree – to protect children, safeguard national ethos/culture and safeguard public morality (2003: Yes, to a certain degree)
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No – all libraries using the government Internet connection are restricted, but those with commercial ISPs are not (2003: No answer)
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, except in community libraries with dial-up connections who charge a fee (2003: Yes, in all libraries)
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	Yes

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.
** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.internetworldstats.com).
*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.