UNESCO integrates ICTs in teaching and learning

1-4 October, Windhoek: The University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Windhoek Office organised a four-day training on Information and Communication technology (ICT) Integration in Windhoek from 1 - 4 October 2018.

As part of the Chinese-Funds-In-Trust (CFIT) Project Phase II to strengthen teachers' capacity in integrating ICTs in teaching and learning, the workshop focused on bringing together previous beneficiaries and new schools to enhance their collaboration and introduce them to pedagogy-led ICT integration practices. The workshop was preceded by a facilitators' planning session on 1 October 2018.

Past ICT integration training initiatives focused mainly on helping teachers utilise ICTs to deliver instruction, create learning resources and design assessment activities, as well as introducing them to online collaboration platforms. This workshop sought to enhance collaboration amongst teachers on ICT integration by providing them with approaches, platforms and resources for collaborating and sharing.

Workshop participants were teachers from all school phases, namely junior primary (lower primary), senior primary, junior and senior secondary, from all 14 regions in Namibia. The group consisted of participants in previous CFIT sponsored workshops as well as new participants. The fact that teachers were organised according to disciplinary areas and school phases made the introduction of the collaboration framework simpler. The disciplinary areas selected are also the most critical and strategic in the country where learning outcomes need improvement and interventions are most needed.

During the workshop, participants were expected to; reflect on current ICT integration practices and chart opportunities offered by ICTs to enhance collaboration; develop a basic understanding of the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework to guide ICT integration; understand the concept of and locate Open Educational Resources (OERs); share expertise and experiences (champion and novice schools/ teachers) on ICT integration innovations and orientate themselves with Kopano as a platform for enhancing community of practice and cross-pollination of ideas.

Challenges that teachers shared during reflective sessions included lack of skills to make use of available ICTs, limited knowledge about where and how to locate open teaching resources online,

limitations in the availability of ICT equipment and access to the Internet. Challenges of collaboration were attributed to lack of time and platforms.

Future interventions should equip teachers with skills to repurpose open educational resources; enhance teachers' understanding of the benefits of empowering all teachers beyond the self; practice the use of Kopano for resource and idea sharing; incorporate action research in their practices to document impact of ICT integration; and foster school leaders' understanding of the value of sharing ICT knowledge.

This initiative falls within the Education