



nba
excellence in education

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE



OUR VISION

Neil Butcher & Associates (NBA) is committed to improving equitable access, quality, and effectiveness of education in developing countries to create supportive, empowered education systems in which people at all levels see themselves as agents of their own change.

PURPOSE, MISSION AND VALUES

NBA's mission is to contribute to improving education in developing world contexts by advancing open, sustainable, and cost-effective solutions to educational challenges. We believe that education should equip learners to think critically, creatively, and independently, as well as to develop a sense of agency and responsibility for their lives and the world in which they live. Education should support learners to be able to generate sustainable livelihoods and become active, engaged, and accountable citizens. Through our work, we strive to create space for stakeholders to engage and connect to promote meaningful change.

We are committed to the delivery of innovative, high-quality work, on time and at competitive prices to meet the needs of our clients and their educational constituencies. We strive to distil key knowledge we gain as we work and share it widely beyond our client base, with a view to maximizing the value of our work around the world. In this way we hope to contribute to the development of education in South Africa, Africa, and beyond.

OUR CORE SERVICES

In striving to fulfil our vision, we provide the following core services:

1. Offering strategic planning and policy advice to significant role players in education planning and implementation.
2. Designing projects and preparing detailed implementation strategies for educational initiatives on all scales.
3. Conducting research and evaluation in the education sector.
4. Developing and aggregating content for course, curriculum and training materials development – working in multiple media including print, video, audio and online multimedia.
5. Developing, supporting and promoting the use of open educational resources (OER).
6. Harnessing the use of open-source and proprietary ICT systems to develop online portals, specialising particularly in content development and management services.
7. Developing the capacity of educators to harness technology effectively to design and implement effective educational courses and programmes.

We are recognized for our practical approaches, which are designed to equip our clients and their beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills they require to implement and scale educational solutions long after our engagements end.

Geographical Spread

Based in Johannesburg, South Africa, NBA has a primary focus on Africa. While retaining a niche focus on the developing world, we have also extended our reach globally through work with clients such as the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).



OUR TEAM



NEIL BUTCHER is based in South Africa, from where he has provided policy and technical advice and support to a range of national and international organizations regarding educational planning, uses of educational technology and distance education, both as a full-time employee at the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) from 1993 to 2001 and as Director of NBA since then. He has worked with various educational institutions (including UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning), assisting with transformation and research efforts that focus on effectively harnessing the potential of distance education methods, educational technology, and OER. Neil has travelled extensively through the developing world conducting research on educational policy, higher education, distance education, education management information systems, and educational technology for a range of organizations, governments, and donors. He works with OER Africa as the project's OER Strategist and is also currently consulting to the World Bank on a range of project activities across several African countries and in Asia.



MONGE TLAKA joined NBA in 2002 as Database and Systems project manager. Monge's role involves website development, improvement and quality control, including continuous content updates, monitoring of other websites targeting a similar audience and producing analytical reports on site visits and usage. She works closely with the clients and various subject experts to develop appropriate taxonomies and tagging of OER materials. Monge has managed a range of online database and web development projects for various organizations. She has gained extensive experience in publishing content online, developing interactive tutorials and implementing online social media strategies. She has also coordinated a range of media strategies producing online marketing materials, website content and keywords for Search Engine Optimizations (SEO), and works with copy editors and graphic designers to produce marketing materials, brochures and newsletters. Monge manages the website technical team and hosting environment. Together with client organizations, Monge supports the implementation of communication and advocacy strategies that promote OER across all publicity materials and websites.



ANDREW MOORE has worked at NBA since 2003 as an author, materials developer, instructional designer, web interface designer, and educational technology trainer. He has also facilitated the development of ICT in Education policies at both national and institutional levels. He is currently managing several projects designed to provide capacity to staff at African ministries of education and higher education institutions to design, develop and deploy e-learning solutions using open resources. He has also helped others use the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers to design professional development courses for teachers in Kenya, Rwanda, Togo, South Africa, Oman, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and the Philippines. Andrew completed a Master of Education degree specializing in Computer Assisted Education at the University of Pretoria and has 14 years' experience teaching secondary education.



CATHY MACDONALD is an expert project manager with over 18 years' experience, specialising in the implementation and management of education projects, nationally and internationally. Cathy has substantial experience in the management of large-scale, multifaceted content and materials development projects with multiple participants and stakeholders across South Africa and internationally. Cathy believes that education should support learners to be able to generate sustainable livelihoods and become active, engaged, and accountable citizens. She seeks to achieve this through her work in the TVET Sector where she is assisting the South African Department of Higher Education and Training to widen and improve access to quality further education opportunities for all South Africans through an Open Learning materials development approach. Cathy has a BSc Ed (Hons) ICT from the University of Durham in England and a Master's degree in Computer-integrated Education from the University of Pretoria.



MERRIDY WILSON-STRYDOM is a senior researcher and project manager with 18 years' experience doing social and educational research in both traditional academic and applied environments. Merridy has worked at all levels of the education sector in South Africa and other developing-country contexts, including schooling, technical and vocational education and training, community colleges, universities and skills development. She is well versed in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including monitoring and evaluation, institutional research, participatory and action research. She has published widely in national and international journals, has published two scholarly books and was an Associate Editor (Education and Social Sciences) for the South African Journal of Science from 2015-2017. Merridy has a PhD in Higher Education Studies from the University of the Free State and an MPhil in Development Studies from Oxford University, which she attended as a Rhodes Scholar. Amongst other clients, she is currently working with the African Leadership Academy (ALA), providing support for institutional learning, and is leading the monitoring and evaluation of the ALA Anzisha Prize programme that works with talented young African entrepreneurs.



SARAH HOOSEN is a lead researcher at NBA. Since joining NBA in 2006, Sarah has evaluated several projects in the area of education and technology, bringing data collection, research, problem solving, analytical, writing, and critical thinking skills. Sarah has worked with, and provided research services to several organizations including Microsoft, UNESCO, the Commonwealth of Learning, the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and ALA. Sarah has also published on issues related to distance education and open educational resources. Sarah manages several research projects, and is currently evaluating the effectiveness of an Africa Careers Network pilot programme (an initiative of the African Leadership Academy running in South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia), a project which aims to enhance the career trajectory of students. She has a Masters Degree in Social Science (Counselling Psychology) and started her career as a counselling psychologist.



JAMES SWASH joined NBA in 2011 as a Senior Developer, Technical Advisor, Systems Administrator and Project Manager. James has been developing, setting up, hosting and maintaining various online platforms, learning management systems (LMS) and content management systems (CMS) since 2008. James worked as a junior developer in C# and .NET languages, using the Dot Net Nuke and Community Server platforms as well as database design using Microsoft SQL Server. James has Advisory, Training, PHP, MySQL, and Linux Server management skills in the Moodle and Drupal platforms. James is a proponent of using open source software and systems to enable and improve access to quality, relevant educational resources in Africa. James enjoys the research and implementation of these web technologies to provide meaningful improvements in education.



KIRSTY VON GOGH joined NBA as a project manager in 2016 and since then her work has focused on early literacy and open licensing for a project funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation but she also collaborates on NBA's work with OER Africa. Her work on various projects includes research, editing, writing, and content development with a focus on open learning. Kirsty is responsible for communications and social media activities at NBA. Before joining NBA, Kirsty worked in educational publishing, producing titles for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. Kirsty has extensive experience publishing print and digital textbooks, online assessment and courses, and resource materials for the schools' curricula across all grades and subjects.



MOHINI BAIJNATH is a researcher, with educational research and evaluation expertise. At NBA, she has worked for distinguished national and international organizations and government entities. She has managed projects for UNESCO Cairo, Artificial Intelligence for Development (AI4D) Africa, and the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB). Mohini has also honed her skills in content development and narrative writing, developing instructional and promotional content for organizations such as African Leadership Academy and the South African Department of Higher Education and Training. In 2017, she obtained her Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Cape Town, having attained her Honours degree in Social Anthropology at the same university. Her Master's dissertation examined conceptions of decolonization and academic freedom and their impact on South Africa's higher education landscape. Mohini's career interests lie at the nexus of research and education, which continues to drive her advocacy for accessible, high-quality education for all.



SELECTED PROJECT PROFILE

Research and Consulting

NBA has nearly 20 years' experience conducting research and evaluation in the education sector. We have worked in early literacy, primary and secondary school education, post-school education and training as well as higher education. Most of our research has focused on developing country contexts and we have a deep understanding of the South African and broader African context, having been involved in research across most countries in Southern, East and West Africa. In addition, we have conducted research in numerous other developing country contexts, including, for example, India, Indonesia and the broader East-Asia region, Serbia, Romania, Azerbaijan, Guyana and others.

NBA's highly competent research team bring immense experience in conducting educational research – whether desktop studies, policy research, large scale surveys, or nuanced and detailed qualitative studies. Our innovative approach to dealing with applied research challenges across developing country contexts forms the foundation of our rigorous, yet practical approach to answering complex educational research questions that respond to the specific needs of our clients, assisting them to think differently about systemic education dilemmas. Through our research (and other activities) NBA strives to present practical alternatives to the increasingly problematic educational status quo, so facilitating meaningful social change.

World Bank

Through Neil Butcher, NBA provides extensive ongoing support to the World Bank in its operations around the world, with focus on developing regions such as Africa, South India, and Eastern Europe. This includes support in programme design and preparation, programme supervision, and expert advice, assistance, and research support in several areas. While much of the support offered includes general programme support and monitoring, specific areas of expertise in which support is provided include: TVET, skills development, and labour markets; EMIS; teacher education; and educational technology. While the portfolio of countries changes from year to year, ongoing support has been provided in, amongst others, India, Indonesia, Romania, Serbia, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia, Mauritius, Lesotho, Tanzania, Burundi, and Somalia.

Hewlett Open Licensing and Early Literacy Research Grant

NBA currently has a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to explore both the potential for open licensing to enhance the availability of mother-tongue early literacy reading resources in the global South and the attendant risks. Through an earlier Hewlett Foundation grant, research covered the impact of open licensing on the early literacy ecosystem, emerging innovations, and the implications for content creation, publishing, and use of reading materials in developing countries, primarily in Africa. Our research focuses on picture books that children can read for pleasure rather than 'decodable' texts that are used for instruction. NBA is continuing this work and carrying out both desktop case studies and action research, with participation from key players in Africa. This research will explore whether open licensing can be employed sustainably by content producers – commercial and non-commercial alike – in the global South, with a focus on Africa. The research also examines how the development of new technologies threatens to disrupt traditional publishing chains, and how these threats might be harnessed to create sustainable new business models. More information can be found at <http://www.earlyliteracynetwork.org/>.



Anzisha Prize, African Leadership Academy

NBA is contracted to the Anzisha Prize (<http://anzishaprize.org/>) programme of the African Leadership Academy (ALA) (<http://www.africanleadershipacademy.org/>) to run their monitoring and evaluation processes and to conduct ad hoc research on specific issues as identified by Anzisha (2018-2020). The Anzisha Prize is a partnership between ALA and Mastercard Foundation. It runs a series of programmes and events and provide on-going support to build entrepreneurial activity of young people in Africa aged 15 to 22 years. NBA's work with Anzisha has included, amongst others, assistance with the writing of a theory of change, developing a results framework against which Anzisha's progress is measured, setting up on-going monitoring systems, designing and building a Management Information System (MIS), data collection and analysis and reporting. NBA has also provided management support for research that Anzisha has commissioned from across the African continent, has played a lead role in the conceptualisation and writing of the Anzisha Scenario, conducted background research on behaviour change communications, policy research to map out the policy environment for very young entrepreneurs across Africa, and research to assist Anzisha to identify key moments of behaviour change for very young entrepreneurs.

African Leadership Academy (ALA) Institutional Learning Support

NBA has been working with the Institutional Learning (IL) division with the ALA (<http://www.africanleadershipacademy.org/>) to provide strategic and practical support in the development of an institution-wide results framework to track performance against the ALA's Strategy 2023 (2018-2020). Having developed the results framework, NBA played an integral role in data collection and quality assurance for the baseline data and was responsible for preparing the comprehensive Strategy 2023 baseline report in early 2019. NBA continues to provide capacity building support to the IL, particularly in the areas of monitoring and evaluation and institutional research/learning. This includes participation in divisional workshops, support with data analysis and report writing.

UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT)

In 2013, NBA was contracted by UNESCO to support the development and review of the national ICT strategies of Kenya, Indonesia and Oman for the use of the UNESCO ICT CFT harnessing OER. NBA was also required to support the development of national implementation strategies, including ensuring that other CFT activities being undertaken in those countries are incorporated into the country's implementation strategy, and to undertake peer review of the course materials, assessment instruments and related tools developed as a component of the national implementation strategies.

NBA is working with UNESCO to support the ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) Network of Champions. In 2017 NBA was contracted by UNESCO to research how the UNESCO ICT CFT had been used by different governments and educational institutions around the world and within different language groups. The following year NBA lead a team of UNESCO-appointed education experts revise and update the framework to reflect recent trends in educational technology. (Access the latest ICT CFT at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265721>).

NBA also maintains the ICT CFT hub on OER Commons, a repository of openly licenced teacher training materials aligned to the competencies described in the ICT CFT. (See <https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/UNESCO>). Currently, NBA is coordinating the activities of a community of practice who support the use of the framework and the open licenced materials and provide guidance to governments and educational institutions who show an interest in using the ICT CFT and its resources.



Information Technology, Knowledge Management and Communications

NBA works with clients to establish simple, intuitive systems (approaches, platforms, procedures), integrated into project management processes that make it easy to find and share knowledge and capture personal learning. We develop communications strategies and plans to effectively distribute, package and share content and resources through relevant channels with the target audience. NBA will also track analytics to gauge the reach and popularity of content, social media referrals, and audience engagement. This information is used to evaluate the strategies implemented and make adjustments regularly to ensure maximum reach.

Content and resources are packaged and shared in a variety of formats to elicit maximum engagement by users. Formats include, amongst others, concise and powerful reports, opinion pieces, interactive slide decks and infographics. To ensure sustained value beyond individual projects and to build capacity of the people with whom we work, we are committed to packaging and sharing our intellectual property for free and open use by anyone in the world.

National Department of Health (NDoH) Knowledge Hub

The Knowledge Hub (KH) is an online platform connecting the public health workforce to relevant, high quality continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and resources. To provide excellent health care to patients, healthcare professionals need to improve their skills and performance, as well as to implement strategies to develop effective managers and health practitioners. Through the KH, they can:

- Access curated and effective professional development opportunities and resources, including online and blended-learning courses, face-to-face workshops, self-study resources, policies, guidelines and reference materials;
- Access an eLibrary of curated legislation, policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures (SOPs), reference materials, and best practices (without having to log into the system);
- Customize their experience based on their job profile and needs and making the information more specific and relevant.

The KH supports learning delivery either entirely online (e-learning) or combined with traditional face-to-face delivery (blended learning). The intention is to build a 'one-stop-shop' through which healthcare professionals can locate and access both mandatory training opportunities implemented by Department and a wider catalogue of recommended, approved CPD opportunities and resources that can help them do their jobs more easily and effectively. www.knowledgehub.org.za

To support the implementation of the new TLD HIV treatment, online training for health care workers was developed and is available for clinicians to provide guidance on initiating antiretroviral therapy (ART) naïve clients; switching existing clients including second and third line on TLD and provision of integrated ART, tuberculosis and family planning services.

The KH team is working closely with the NDoH to develop and roll out COVID-19 management and infection prevention and control training (virtual workshops and online courses) for all workers in the South African public health care sector. Access to the latest processes, procedures and guidelines is critical to the nation's response to the COVID-19 crisis and the KH is central to the NDoH's communication.



OER Africa

NBA has been integrally involved in *Saide's* OER Africa initiative (see <https://www.oerafrica.org/>) as a core project partner. Since 2008, OER Africa's mission has been to establish dynamic networks of African OER practitioners by sensitizing and connecting like-minded educators – teachers, academics, trainers, and policy makers – to develop, share, and adapt OER to meet the education needs of African societies. By creating and sustaining networks of collaboration – face-to-face and online – OER Africa supports African educators and learners to harness the power of OER. In turn, they can develop their capacity and join emerging global OER networks as active participants who showcase Africa's intellectual property, rather than passive consumers of knowledge produced elsewhere. This work has involved numerous collaborations with universities across Africa, engagement with key IGOs like UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning, extensive research on OER, and establishment of OER Africa as a global thought leader in the OER space.

In the current grant, OER Africa is undertaking collaborative work to develop the professional competences and skills of stakeholders within African higher education institutions so that they can implement OER practices to improve the quality of teaching and learning. NBA has led the development of short, concise learning pathways providing users with the skills to use open content. The learning pathways were used as part of a research project to improve ongoing professional development for higher education educators. They covered issues such as finding, evaluating and adapting open content, devising appropriate learning designs and publishing research within Open Access journals. The learning pathways for 'Adapt Open Content' can be found at <https://www.oerafrica.org/communication/adapt-new-content/#/>

Development of a Learning and Knowledge Management Platform for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

NBA has been contracted to develop an online Learning and Knowledge Management Platform to function as a gateway to a broad range of tools that enable countries and stakeholders to address issues related to educational policy making and on-the-ground implementation. ADEA and NBA will develop and manage a technology platform, with integrated content and knowledge management, e-learning, communications, networking, and social media capabilities. This site will aim to bring together key players – at government level, within ADEA, research organizations, and others in the education sector – to collaborate and share knowledge and information. It will deliver key messages directly to the right audience, making an instant impact. Its technical design will enable seamless, automated integration, and information-sharing with the other global repositories.

British Council

NBA worked in conjunction with the British Council and the South African Department of Higher Education to develop a set of digital guidelines to introduce stakeholders to the A21, the new South African apprenticeship system. NBA further developed animations and interviewed prominent personnel in order to enrich the guidelines with multimedia assets. NBA also ran a social media campaign, incorporating MailChimp, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and SoundCloud, to spread awareness of the new system and the guidelines. The A21 digital guideline resources can be accessed below:

A21 Guidelines:

<https://nadsc.dhet.gov.za/A21>

A21 Animations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVSBQwB8J5c&list=PLwqwK07J4Hqw45xUnVI6Yg52pMYowYxUR>

A21 Podcasts:

<https://soundcloud.com/andrew-moore-115219849/sets/a21-podcast-stakeholders>



Content and Course Development

NBA uses the latest instructional methodologies and technologies to create programmes of exceptionally high educational standards that are fit for purpose and address our client's specific contextual requirements and where necessary, constraints.

NBA's content and course development is based on a clear understanding of the people and context for whom the programme is intended, the purpose and objectives for which it is being developed and the principles and pedagogy that guide its development and implementation.

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Open Learning (OL)

NBA is currently managing the development of curriculum content and open learning materials for the Occupational Certificate: Electrician Programme (OCEP) for the DHET. The DHET has selected the Occupational Certificate: Electrician programme as the first programme to be developed and delivered through the National Open Learning System (NOLS). One of the goals of the project is to define a general and broadly applicable practical approach and methodology to designing for and implementing Open Learning programmes within the TVET sector as a possible support strategy for the DHET to meet the targets outlined in the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP).

For exemplar materials visit <http://dhet-tvet-lms.co.za/course/view.php?id=30>

Username: guest

Password: guest

Adapting Current Open Learning Educational Resources to Produce Digital Teaching and Learning Resources (Courseware) for Mathematics and Science (Vocational)

NBA is currently adapting Current Open Learning Educational Resources to Produce Digital Teaching and Learning Resources (Courseware) for Mathematics and Science (Vocational) for the DHET. For this project, the DHET has decided to develop open and self-facilitated text-based materials for the National Certificate (Vocational) programmes in Mathematics and Physical Science at Levels 2 – 4. This project is principally an open textbook design and development project that will culminate in the publication of learning materials in various formats that support maximum dissemination, access, use and educational impact as well as their reuse and adaptation by others. However, this project is also, importantly, a capacity development initiative to build the capacity of a group of existing TVET lecturers in the processes involved in creating new, high-quality OERs through the reuse and adaptation of existing open materials.

Technical Assistance to Conduct Introductory and Provincial Open Learning Workshops for TVET Colleges and Universities

Neil Butcher has been contracted by European Consulting for Developing Countries (ECFDC) to build the knowledge and understanding of TVET staff in the extent and range of Open Learning approaches, Open Educational Resources, and the use of multi-media and materials development processes (Electronic, Online, Open Learning).

The specific objective of the assignment is to provide technical assistance to DHET staff in the Directorate: Career Development and Open Learning in:



- Building knowledge and understanding of the extent and range of open learning approaches, open educational resources, the use of multi-media and materials development processes (electronic, online, open learning), and introducing new developments and practices in the development of electronic, online, open learning materials;
- Developing a materials development model for the Department to adopt;
- Assisting the Department in setting up a unit for materials development; and
- Working with Department curriculum officials, open learning management team, materials developers, media experts, and instructional designers in developing an open learning materials development workflow for the Department.

Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGS LG) online support and ICT for Teachers professional development course

During 2017, NBA helped MGS LG to develop and pilot an online ICT literacy programme, called MG Online. MGS LG, in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Education, is administering the programme for approximately 10,000 teachers in Gauteng province. Given NBA's extensive experience in working with the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) and implementing similar projects throughout Africa and the developing world, the team was invited to assist MGS LG in adapting existing open educational resources (OER) and developing new South Africa-specific content. In total, 56 units comprising 80 notional hours were developed. NBA assisted the MGS LG in training the facilitators to administer the course and developed the pilot programme, which was successfully concluded in the latter half of 2017. This course has now been accredited by the South African Council for Educators (SACE), which means that users will have the opportunity to earn points towards their continuing professional development (CPD) requirements by completing this course.





A SAMPLE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PUBLICATIONS

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A SAMPLE OF PAPERS

Neil Butcher and Associates. (2019). *Career Development and Employability: Desktop Research to Benchmark Local and Global Practices*. Prepared for University of the Free State

Hoosen, S., Neil Butcher, N., Wang'ati-Gnagbo, M., and Muhati, P. (2016). *Impact Evaluation of The Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) African Leadership in Information Communication Technology and Knowledge Society Development (ALICT) – Leadership Africain pour les Technologie Information Communication et le développement de la société du savoir (LATIC)*.

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