Community of Practice for the Teaching and Learning of African Languages (CoPAL)

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- The Community of Practice for the Teaching and Learning of African Languages (CoPAL) is a Community of Practice that forms part of the devolved governance structure of the Universities South Africa (USAf).

- **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** provide a platform for tertiary institutions to share information, knowledge, and concerns, as well as collaborating in addressing common challenges with a focus on operational issues rather than strategic concerns.

- CoPAL was established in 2016 following a series of regional transformation workshops under the auspices of USAf (then called HESA) in 2015.

- The inaugural meeting was held on 7 September 2016

- In accordance with the principles guiding a community of practice, CoPAL provides an opportunity for academics and relevant other university staff members to collaborate, network and share knowledge on issues of common interest or concern.

- The main objectives of the CoPAL are to promote and strengthen the teaching and learning of African Languages in public universities in South Africa by:
  - ➢Actively contributing to the review of the current national language policy which should include a high-level assessment of its implementation to date and the reasons for difficulties in this regard.
  - ➢Actively contributing to the development of national, time-bound implementation plans for the reviewed policy.
  - ➢Contributing to and participating in the development of a national terminology framework and strategy to promote the use of African Languages.
  - ➢Benchmarking, developing, advocating and sharing good practices and relevant information needed to advance the teaching of African Languages in schools, by contributing to teacher training initiatives for African Languages and to the development of approaches to the teaching of African Languages that use African Languages in the teaching process.

- Benchmarking, developing, advocating and sharing good practices and relevant information needed to enhance regional collaboration among African Languages scholars.
- Actively contributing to the establishment of linguistic networks to ensure that information and common understandings are shared.
- Contributing to the development of, and initiating activities designed to enhance the participation of postgraduate students in African Languages studies and research in African Languages.
- Providing a shared, common platform from which to find ways to enhance and facilitate collaboration between and amongst universities.
- Identifying centres of excellence per African Language.
- Exploring and making recommendations regarding the transformation of the teaching and learning of African Languages in public universities.
- Exploring and making recommendations on the way the African Languages can be used as resources in teaching and learning.

Working groups

- Three working groups have been constituted to engage with the eleven priorities that emerged from the 2015 transformation workshops. They focus on the following topics linked to the objectives stated in the CoP's Terms of Reference:

  ➢National and university language policies;

  ➢Benchmarking and developing, advocating and sharing good practices, information and resources with respect to African languages; and

  ➢Terminology, translation and interpretation.

- Collaborations: Establishing linguistic networks to share information, develop common understandings and avoid duplication of work;

Round Table on ALs in the Age of the 4IR

Aim:

To articulate a clear appreciation of 4IR in South Africa and how indigenous African languages can benefit from the advances both in terms of teaching and learning, and innovative research

Focus Areas:

- 4IR and its implications for indigenous African Languages;

- Resources and platforms;

- Issue of online teaching through African languages and

- Collaborations through 4IR.