



**POLYTECHNIC
OF NAMIBIA**

transforming into
Namibia University of
Science and Technology

Polytechnic of Namibia: International Relations Department

**International
Relations**

IRNEWS

Newsletter 2014 ► OCT/DEC Issue

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AIESEC Facilitates Internship in Portugal

Elia Sangunji (ES), a Polytechnic student and an AIESEC member finds himself in Portugal doing an internship thanks to AIESEC.

An acronym for International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences, AIESEC is the global youth network impacting the world through leadership development experiences. It provides its members access to global internships and leadership opportunities at their respective campuses and abroad.

Sangunji, is a final year student enrolled in the Bachelor Information Technology Software Engineering programme. Sangunji started his internship in August 2014 and will continue until January 2015. He is working at Coimfor Lda, a software company. Although the company is based in Portugal, it has clients in African countries, including Namibia. Other students doing internships through AIESEC are from Brazil, China, Armenia and Korea.

AIESEC realises the internship opportunities with their vast network of partnerships. Their role is to provide information and assistance with integration and orientation of students. Although Sangunji paid flight and visa costs with his savings and assistance from his family, he said the experience he is gaining will broaden his horizons and thus is worth his investment. He said the remuneration from his internship is sufficient to cover all basic needs such as accommodation, meals and local transport for the duration of the internship.

Below is his conversation with IR News about his internship:

IRN: *Share some of the highlights (good and bad) of your trip.*

ES: The greatest asset in Portugal, I believe, is the people. They are very accommodating and friendly. Always concerned about your wellbeing and always willing to help. There were some adjustments I needed to make like driving on the right! Namibian working hours are completely different compared to Portugal's 9am to 7pm with a two hour lunch in between. The public transport system is very different too. In Namibia we use taxis for public

transport but in Portugal I had to use the Metro (bus) system which come according to schedule. Taxis are more expensive to use. This was the most difficult adjustment. But all this was made up for by the great food one finds in Portugal. Nothing can compare to Portuguese food, it is simply the best!

IRN: *What benefits have you experienced from being an AIESEC NAMIBIA member?*

ES: AIESEC is one of the greatest student networks as it has a chapter in every continent. There are students in other AIESEC chapters who want to welcome visiting students from other parts of the world therefore one ends up having a vast network of friends from all over the world as well as developing interpersonal skills. I have and still am experiencing a global experience with AIESEC!



Intra-ACP STREAM Bids Students Farewell

The Intra-ACP STREAM mobility scheme project bid farewell to five of the six students at the Polytechnic. The five Masters students were part of the first cohort of student intake and began their studies in February 2013. Hailing from five African nations, the students will return to their home countries to fulfil the aim of the mobility scheme by using their newly gained knowledge to contribute to the development of their respective nations.

This is the first group of students under the STREAM project to complete their studies at the Polytechnic of Namibia. Other participating universities such as University of the Free State, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, and University of Buea also had students complete their mobilities. Project wide, 20 Masters and Doctoral students have to date completed their mobility periods, with 12 successfully completing their degree programmes.

To celebrate the students' achievements and say farewell, the Department of International Relations hosted a dinner in their honour. Speaking at the dinner, the Intra-ACP STREAM programme coordinator, Mr Lameck Mwewa thanked the students for their hard work and encouraged them to use the experience and knowledge they gained during their stay at the Polytechnic and in Namibia to "further their professional goals and contribute positively to their nations' development."

The students and their expected degrees are as follows: Fortune Mukanya (Zimbabwe), Master of

Information Technology; Julius Laiser (Tanzania) and Gorata Boikanyo (Botswana), Masters of Integrated Land Management; Melaku Mekuriaw (Ethiopia) and Franklin Sika (Ghana), Masters of Integrated Water Resource Management. These students will receive their degrees at the graduation ceremony scheduled for April 2015.



Intra-ACP STREAM Receives AU Monitor

The Polytechnic recently welcomed Dr. Yohannes Woldetensae, Senior Education Expert, Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship Scheme from the African Union Commission. Dr Woldetensae came on a mission to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Intra-ACP STREAM mobility scheme which the Polytechnic has been implementing since 2012. His aim he said "was to learn about the challenges and successes of implementing Intra-African mobility programmes since in the future the African Union aims to fund such programmes".

Dr Woldetensae had a series of meetings with the project implementation staff in order to get a full picture of the challenges and opportunities that implementing a mobility scheme presents in terms of finances, managing the partnership, student selection, and other logistical matters. He also met with Intra-ACP STREAM beneficiaries currently enrolled at the Polytechnic "to get their perspective of the impact the scholarship".

In addition, Dr Woldetensae also delivered a presentation to all the deans of the institution on the higher education opportunities and trends at the AU. He highlighted the current attempt to create a quality assurance framework for higher education institutions in Africa.



Pictured from left to right is: Lameck Mwewa (SNRSS Dean and Intra-ACP STREAM Project Coordinator); Prof Tjama Tjivikua (Rector); Dr Yohannes Woldetensae; Paulina Haikola (International Relations Officer and Intra-ACP STREAM Polytechnic Coordinator); Dr Andrew Niiikondo (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs & Research); Dr Marius Kudumo (Department of International Relations Director); Dr Colen Tuaundu (Director: Quality Assurance Unit).

Concordia & Polytechnic Define Partnership

A delegation from Concordia University Irvine in the USA, recently visited the Polytechnic in order to further define the nature of the partnership between the two institutions. The Polytechnic signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the California based private university in June 2013, agreeing to collaborate in various areas, especially in student exchange and establishing close ties between the business related faculties.

Ms Mitsy Wilson, Project Leader in the Office of the Provost was accompanied by Dr Barbara Morton, Assistant to the Provost. While at the Polytechnic, the delegation met with Dr Grafton Whyte, Director of the Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business to discuss possible collaboration between the Polytechnic's MBA and Concordia's Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS) programme.

When brought to fruition, this collaboration would bring MAIS students to Namibia for nine months of course work and community engagement. Polytechnic students and Namibians would also have an opportunity to enrol in the MAIS programme and spend three months in California. The academic focus of this collaboration would be business, entrepreneurship, and leadership and change management within the civil society sector. Dr Whyte expressed great excitement at the prospect of the collaboration, especially savouring the chance for Polytechnic MBA students to travel to the United States as part of their study abroad component which currently takes them to Germany and South Africa.

Ms Wilson and Dr Morton also met with the International Relations Department staff to discuss their Across-the-Continent Semester: Africa, an undergraduate study abroad programme which aims to send students to the Polytechnic in 2015. Exchanges involving academic staff and potential sources of funding for such exchanges were also discussed.

During their visit to Namibia the delegation was hosted by the National Youth Council. They met with members of various industries within Namibia.



Pictured left to right are: Dr Barbara Morton, Cynthia Kauami, Mitsy Wilson, and Dr Grafton Whyte.

Dione Izaks: International Relations Officer: my highlight for 2014

Returning Polytechnic students from internship attachments abroad was certainly my highlight of the year. Let us continue to strive and work towards student-centredness.



Ms Justina Keendjele during her 3-month internship attachment in Switzerland at Chocolate Factory (Chocolat Frey)



Ms Martha Hanhindi during her 3-month internship attachment in Switzerland at Swiss Quality Training Services (SQTS)



Ms Christalin Mushongo during her 3-month internship attachment in Switzerland at HACO SWISS

IR Staff narrates their highlights of the year:

Dr Marius Kudumo: Director International Relations:

My highlight for the year was attending the International Education Day and witnessing how internationalisation have changed the worldviews of former students. I was very impressed to see students who have been exposed internationally confidently exhibiting their acquired problem-solving and critical-thinking skills that are important in the globalized world.

I wish our readers and staff members of the Department in particular and the Polytechnic in general a Merry Christmas and prosperous 2015 full of continuous learning and growth opportunities.

Theodora Nandjaa-Mweuta: Coordinator International Relations:

My highlight for 2014 was being able to lead my team members as the Acting Director for six months. Another highlight was being able to navigate between my work and my studies and eventually wrote exams in December 2014.

The year 2014 was fun and fast. I cannot wait for 2015 to say proudly: I work for the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

Yolande Geises : International Student Support Officer:

My highlight for the year was my trip to Wiesbaden, Germany. I am grateful to our partner University , RheinMain University of Applied Sciences and the Polytechnic of Namibia for granting my colleague, Ms Theodora Nandjaa-Mweuta and I the memorable opportunity. The visit was part of the staff exchange programme aimed at strengthening the partnership between our two institutions.



Left Yolande Geises (International Student Support Officer), middle Tobias Lupek , right Florian Montag (former exchange students from Rheinmain University of Applied Sciences on a boat trip in Wiesbaden).

Susan Kambrude: International Students Supporting Officer:

The Polytechnic of Namibia once more hosted international exchange students on campus during the Second Semester. The exchanges are made possible through the agreements which have been signed between the Polytechnic and its various partner universities worldwide.

Lennart Fink, Simon Winkler-Portmann, and Jan-Christian Goebel are some of the students who stood out from the crowd. Lennart and Simon are from Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, and Jan-Christian studies at Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences.

The three students did not only come to our office to ask for assistance, but also popped in to make us laugh with some funny talk. They always had something nice to tell us about their stay here in Windhoek and trips around the country, e.g. the baboon who stole Lennart and Simon's poppy seed bread and big bag of pasta during their last trip to Ai-Ais Resort.

Yolandé Geises and I were invited for a goodbye dinner by Lennart and Simon at a local restaurant. We had loads of laughter throughout the night, thanks to the two students.

I wish all Polytechnic students, including the exchange students, and staff a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year. May more local students get a chance to explore life outside Namibia.



From left to right: Lennart Fink, Yolandé Geises, Susan Kambrude, Simon Winkler-Portmann

Polytechnic Student's Life Changing Experience at Mercedes Benz Plant

The Department of International Relations facilitates various study-abroad opportunities for Polytechnic students in collaboration with international partners.

Student Experience Programme or STEP is one such opportunity. STEP offers six month internships in Germany to students from the SADC region in various fields. Candidates have to attend German language classes before and during their attachment. STEP also involves workshops on soft skills, emotional intelligence, presentation skills, the German culture, history and business or work ethics. *IR News* caught up with Stefanus Mutileni (SM) a third year Mechanical Engineering student who recently returned from Germany.

IR: Tell us about yourself and how you came to participate in the STEP programme.

SM: I was born and grew up in Epyeshona, a small village 3km north of Oshakati in Oshana region. I am the second born of six kids. After secondary I enrolled for a Bachelors of Technology in Mechanical Engineering at the Polytechnic of Namibia in 2012. Part of my qualification requires me to do in-service training in my second or third year.

I have always been interested in going to Germany or Italy thus, in my second year, when I came across the call for applications for the STEP Internship on the Polytechnic website I decided to apply. I had a series of interviews and on Friday 13th December 2013, I received a call from Germany!! I had been selected to carry out a six month internship at Mercedes Benz. I worked in the Quality and Project management department for foreign plants. My experience was life changing.

IR News: What were your expectations prior to departure and how did they compare to the reality you found in Germany?

SM: I had no idea as to how life would be in Germany. I had a feeling it was going to be exciting and indeed it was! The only thing I was sure to experience was the love for football. Reality is that I had a very good experience with German culture, the social life and at work as well.

The Germans are quite social and really have a good balance between work, school and their social life that involves a lot of sports. The professionalism in the work place is really high. I appreciate this the most, because everything functioned like clockwork. Unlike



Stefanus Mutileni

most Namibian companies, which just take in students and graduates without real training, Mercedes Benz seeks to improve the skills of their students as much as possible so an internship is still more of a learning podium. In my department the department head would often ask "What do you want to know?" and hand out a list to tick off what they want or think they really need to upgrade on.

Germany, with its rivers, forests and infrastructure is truly a beautiful country. Beautiful in a way that I did not expect at all.

IR News: Share some of the highlights of your trip.

SM: Being in another country for six months alone was a highlight! I felt I was part of world-class company and I was! Mercedes Benz is a big automotive company and the internship was a realisation of a childhood dream. Additionally, I visited so many places in Germany such as the BMW museum and the Bayern Munich stadium and the Allianz Arena which made my whole experience exciting. I also had the chance to visit Florence and Venice in Italy. Florence is by far the most historically rich city I have visited.

There were also some low moments, such as missing my family so much. Given that it was the first time I was so far away from home and in a completely new environment, there were times when I really just needed to tell myself that; "Stef, you'll go home soon, right now, just enjoy every moment of this experience." Otherwise, my trip was just amazing.

IR News: Would you recommend other Polytechnic students to go abroad? If so, why?

SM: Yes, I would very much recommend going abroad because it is really an eye opener to experience and live in a place with a completely different culture and standards. It is also a great opportunity to build world class skills especially if you are doing an internship.

You can network and build friendships. Europe is very convenient to travel in so one can visit many countries while there. Moreover, there is more to it than just travelling, you actually learn and discover! There is just not, in my opinion, a better opportunity and so I really recommend the Polytechnic students to grab these opportunities and make the best out of them.

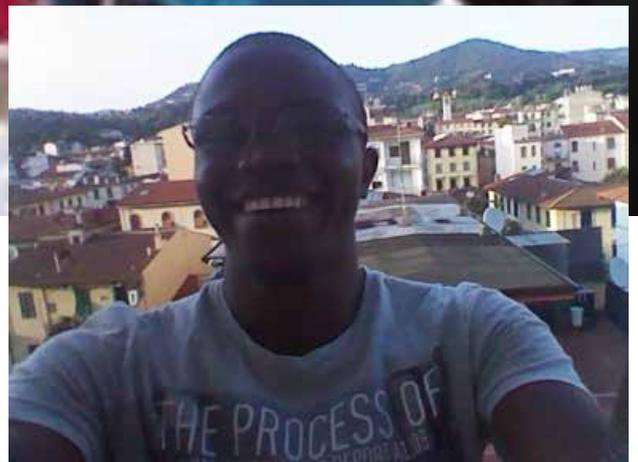
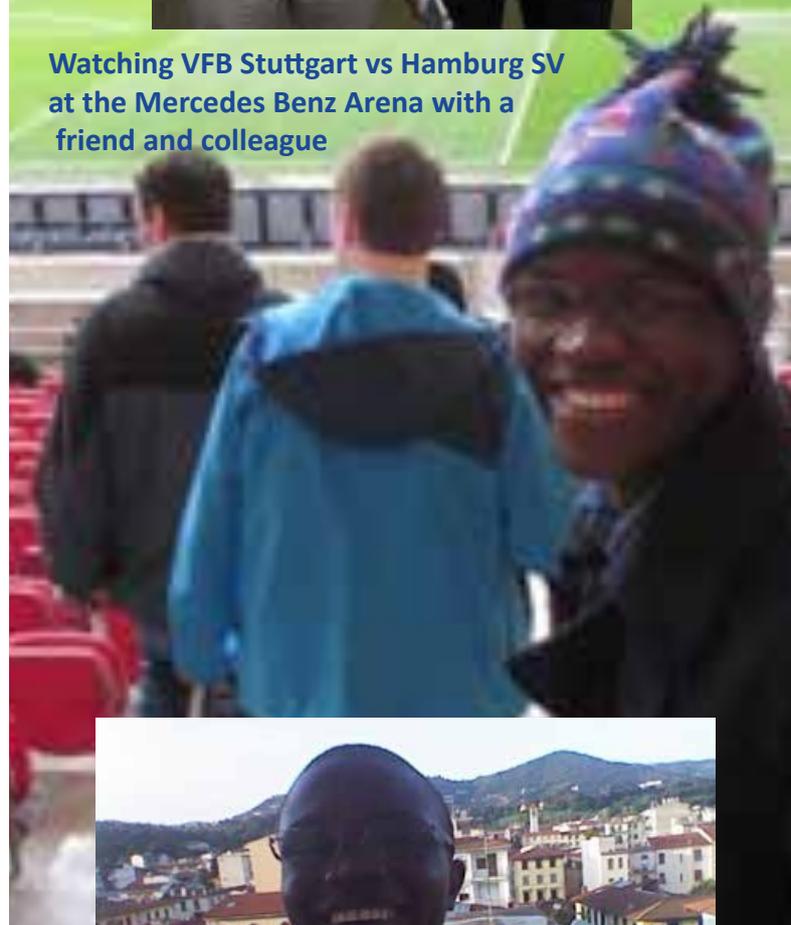
IR News: How has the STEP Programme changed you?

SM: The STEP programme expanded my view of the world. I can say it brought the best out of me. When you work in a fast and efficient team, you learn so much. You also realise just how much you can do and how best you can do certain things. I learned how to be more professional, how to cope with emotions and how to deal or interact with different people of different religions, cultures and age groups too.

I really thank the Polytechnic of Namibia and Daimler (Mercedes Benz) for the opportunity. I needed such an opportunity and I can only be thankful for each party involved in the decisions taken to make it a reality.



Watching VFB Stuttgart vs Hamburg SV at the Mercedes Benz Arena with a friend and colleague



Taking a selfie in Florence, Italy and Barcelona, Spain respectively