

NUST BRIEF

Doctoral candidates receive scholarships

Ten Doctoral candidates from NUST and the University of Namibia (UNAM), received scholarships from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism. The sponsorship was made possible through the Ministry's Namibia Integrated Landscape Approach for Enhancing Livelihoods and Environmental Governance to Eradicate Poverty (NILALEG) Project, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

"The three main components of NILALEG are to improve - environmental governance; sustainable management of our natural resources; and enhance livelihoods for poverty eradication in our rural areas through nature-based enterprises," remarked Hon Pohamba Shifeta, the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

Ms Alka Bhatia, the UNDP Resident Representative commended NILALEG for catering to almost all the Sustainable Development Goals, in terms of addressing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Five of the beneficiaries are from NUST's Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences, who will be pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Resources Sciences. They are: Paulina Naupu; Epfania Sheyavali; Clarence Ntesa; Kamuhelo Lisao; and

Johannes Munango.

The candidates expressed their profound gratitude to the various stakeholders for the funding.

"The research projects that the candidates will be working on all have linkages to the main goals of the NILALEG Project. This too is well aligned with the NUST Strategic Goals, specifically the one which focusses on Driving Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The University is working tirelessly to grow its student profile, particularly at postgraduate level," remarked NUST Vice-Chancellor, Dr Eroid Naomab.

In their studies, each of the beneficiaries will investigate topics that range from determining the impacts of nature-based enterprises or ecological restoration on livelihoods, to determining the tolerance of native plants to droughts.



Prof Kenneth Matengu, UNAM Vice-Chancellor (second from left); Hon Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (sixth from left); Dr Eroid Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor (third from right); and Alka Bhatia, UNDP Country Representatives (fourth from right), pictured with other stakeholders and the scholarship beneficiaries.

Learning through the Youth Opportunity Forum

In commemoration of Europe Day that is celebrated annually on the 9th of May, the European Union (EU), in collaboration with NUST, hosted a Youth Opportunity Forum under the theme Youth Resilience, Innovation and Networking during COVID-19.



The youth taking advantage of opportunities offered by the European Union.



EU Ambassador, HE Sinikka Antila

Youth from various institutions gathered at the event to gain knowledge on topics such as the adaptation to new learning dimensions, digital solutions to social atomisation during COVID-19 and youth empowerment through technology. "This gathering will prove to be a stepping-stone for your personal and professional development.

It is quite a privilege to be able to acquire knowledge and build extensive networks from a diverse pool of experts, at no cost," NUST Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, Dr Andrew Niikondo said.

A fourth-year Bachelor of Public Management student from the University of Namibia (UNAM), Titus Hamakali, was excited to interact with fellow youth who share a common interest in skills development. Another student, Harvest Ithana, a fourth-year Bachelor of Media Studies student from UNAM was keen to cover the event with the possibility of learning something new. "I hope to take back something from the panel

discussions. The topics seem insightful and I am sure they will boost my current skillset," she said.

Addressing the youth directly, HE Sinikka Antila, the EU Ambassador to Namibia, highlighted that the EU is committed to empower the youth in giving them better opportunities to address current challenges. "The EU works with its multilateral and local partners to ensure that the youth around the world acquire new skills to contribute to a common brighter present and future," HE Antila went on to say.

Furthermore, HE Antila was proud to announce the successful launch of their 2021-2027 Erasmus Plus Scholarship Programme which offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in higher education, vocational education, school education and sport. "The Erasmus Plus Scholarship Programme budget for 2021-2027 has increased to €26.2 billion compared to €14.7 billion for 2014-2020," she elaborated.

SCIONA Knowledge Fair a success

The SCIONA Knowledge Fair under the EU-funded SCIONA project, titled "Co-designing conservation technologies for Iona-Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Conservation Area" took place from 13-15 April.

NUST researchers and students from the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences and the Faculty of Computing and Informatics have partnered with the Angolan Instituto Superior de Ciências de Educação da Huíla (ISCED). Associated with the two institutions over the past three years are the Environment Ministries from both countries, the Iona Park Management, individual international conservation experts, conservancies and local communities in both countries.

Speaking at the fair, NUST's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, Prof Pramanathan Govender, revealed that wildlife populations in the Skeleton Coast Park and the adjacent conservancies have increased over the last 40 years. "The park is rich in biodiversity and endemic plants,

which offer multiple scientific and economic opportunities. It is, therefore, imperative to work as a multi-national transdisciplinary team to tackle local challenges while contributing to global solutions," Prof Govender explained.

EU Head of the Cooperation Section, Achim Schaffert, said that the project builds on the Namibian experiences with community involvement in ecotourism and conservation. "The Knowledge Fair is a major event that brings together community members, researchers and other key stakeholders to exchange knowledge on how to jointly realise sustainable ecosystem management for the new Iona Skeleton Coast Transfrontier Park," Schaffert elaborated.

Participants were afforded the opportunity to enhance their indigenous knowledge



Prof Pramanathan Govender, NUST's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation



Achim Schaffert, European Union: Head of the Cooperation Section

perspective and learn about the use of camera traps, soil or vegetation maps and wildlife counts. "I am pleased to have seen the application of drones, virtual reality and the deployment of co-designed mobile applications to support a more effective ecosystem management," Prof Govender

said. The SCIONA Knowledge Fair hosted activities such as workshops, which are community-led river and ethnobotanical walks; workshops and trainings of skills and competencies related to natural resource conservation; and academic presentations.