

The first SASSCAL Graduate Studies Programme is here!

In an effort to address the capacity needs for the water sector in the SADC region, the Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management (SASSCAL), launched its first Graduate Studies Programme in Integrated Water Resources Management (SGSP-IWRM).

A cohort of 13 candidates from the five SASSCAL member countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia) received scholarships to pursue doctoral qualifications.

The funding, valued at N\$40-million, was availed by SASSCAL through Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Closing the skills gap

Currently, there is limited capacity to support a broad and integrated approach for sustainable water resources management and water security in the SADC region. "In order for the region to overcome these challenges, we must build higher calibre

scientists and engineers who will come up with innovative technological solutions to manage the water resources we have in a more sustainable manner," Dr Jane Olwoch, the SASSCAL Executive Director said.

Dr Eroid Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor, expressed his gratitude towards the SASSCAL funding. "Several students wish to pursue their studies up to Doctoral level, but due to financial challenges, this may become an unattainable goal. Therefore, the financial support from SASSCAL goes a long way," Dr Naomab stated.

Thematic Areas

The Programme is underway with seven females and six males who commenced with

their doctoral studies in the thematic areas of *Water and Wastewater Systems and Technology; Hydrology and Geohydrology; Water Security under Climate and Environmental Changes; and Sustainable Water, Energy and Food Security [WEF Nexus]*.

In addition, the SASSCAL Graduate Studies Programme (SGSP) will offer academic and research short courses in *Statistical Analysis, Programming, Critical Thinking, Research Ethics, and Research Design and Methodology*.



Dr Jane Olwoch, SASSCAL Executive Director (second from left); Dr Svenja Kruse, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany (fourth from left); Ms Florette Nakusera, NUST Council Chairperson (fourth from right); Dr Eroid Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor (third from left), pictured with various key delegates at the launch of the SGSP.



Two learners from the People's Primary School testing out the HoloLens and Lidar technology.

Futuristic education through livestreamed holograms

A one-week co-designed workshop at People's Primary School, in Windhoek, was co-facilitated by Prof Heike Winschiers-Theophilus from the Faculty of Computing and Informatics and Olivia Itenge, a Programme Development Coordinator at NUST.

The workshop allowed participants to explore new 3D live streaming technology using the Microsoft HoloLens, Lidar technology (laser cameras), and share educational practices of engagement, and design novel interactions to guide future developments of the technology to be used in an educational context.

The workshop forms part of a four-year Academy of Finland funded project under the leadership of Prof Erkki Sutinen, from the University of Turku, in partnership with an international and interdisciplinary research team. "This immersive technology will connect people across continents, with a feeling of being present and together, while being in remote places," Prof Sutinen said.

Dr Naska Goagagoses, from the Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, the educational psychologist on the team, ensured that pedagogical frameworks and constructs, such as academic engagement, are embraced in the design of the technology

to facilitate remote presence education. "Although the technology is in its infancy, it is of outmost importance to include Namibian students and teachers at an early stage to ensure local needs and ideas which will influence future development and global edutech trends," Prof Winschiers-Theophilus emphasised.

The teachers and students who participated in the workshop provided valuable suggestions, of which some will be implemented by the software development team, led by Dr Nicolas Pope from the University of Turku.

"Exploring the usage of cutting-edge technologies such as the HoloLens, provide unique and innovative opportunities in TVET and social entrepreneurship that is much needed for Namibia to drive the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Dr Colin Stanley, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnerships of NUST explained.



Scenes from the April 2022 Graduation Ceremony.

Faculty of Computing and Informatics receives donation from Namclear

NUST's Faculty of Computing and Informatics was bestowed with a generous donation of production/networking equipment from Namclear.

The equipment was handed over to Dr Eroid Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor, by Fabian Tait, the Managing Director of Namclear. The contribution aims to improve education by bridging the gap between NUST accomplishments and industry needs. "Namclear relies heavily on technology, both software and hardware, and it is part of the company's strategy to stay advanced in terms of hardware and technology," said Tait.

The estimated value of the donation is N\$566 300. It is expected that new courses

such as *Clout Networking, High Performance Computing, System Virtualisation, Data Center Management, and Software Defined Networking* both under-graduate and honours level will stand to benefit from the given equipment in terms of practical exposure. "Technology interfaces with society and in doing so, we want to make sure that the interface between technology and society is done in an ethical and useful manner. To do the interface, we must bring education skills and competent development into play," Dr Naomab remarked.



Dr Eroid Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor (right), receiving a donation from Namclear Managing Director, Fabian Tait (left).

NUST graduates 2350 students during its April Graduation Ceremony

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, NUST was fortunate to host a face-to-face Graduation Ceremony for their 2022 April graduates. This auspicious event was hosted on NUST's Main Campus over a two-day period.

Delivering the keynote address at the event, Hon Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation, was pleased to witness yet another milestone of the University. "Continue living an exemplary life of perseverance and discipline, your aim should always be that of making a difference in life, for that is the hallmark of an educated fellow," she imparted to the graduates.

Vice-Chancellor of the Namibia University of Science and Technology, Dr Eroid Naomab, shared the same sentiments as Hon Dr Kandjii-Murangi, and implored the students to be agents of change by being the difference

they want to see in the world. "NUST is setting new standards and benchmarks in the Namibia Higher Education sector focusing on the core tenants of people, student-centric approach, and systems to drive the University towards sustainability," he said.

This year, the graduation celebration symbolised the triumph of the human spirit and resilience against the mystical vices of the world, which was exemplified by 2 350 students graduating across all fields of studies. Of these graduates, 82 obtained their Master's qualifications.