



FROM LEFT: Prof Rob Warren, Director: South African Medical Research Council Centre for Tuberculosis Research, Stellenbosch University; Dr Tjama Tjivikua, NUST Founding Vice-Chancellor; Ben Nangombe, Executive Director: Ministry of Health and Social Services; Mekondja Nghipandula, Acting CEO: Namibia Institute of Pathology, and Dr Rudie van Vuuren, Director: N/a'ankuse Foundation.

## Consortium gears up to fight Tuberculosis

NUST signed a Memorandum of Understanding with four partners that are equally keen to strengthen collaboration in Tuberculosis (TB) research and training, as well as capacity development. The partners are, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), the Namibian Institute of Pathology, Stellenbosch University, and the N/a'ankuse Foundation.

Namibia has one of the highest TB incidence rates in the world, reporting nearly 10 000 cases in 2015, with a multi-drug resistant TB prevalence of between 3.9 percent for new cases and 8.7 percent for previously treated cases.

TB significantly affects the country's economically productive population aged from 25 to 44, and threatens socio-economic development.

"Global efforts to control the TB contagion are hampered by an inadequate understanding of the disease's epidemiology and a lack of effective interventions to prevent the transmission of both drug susceptible and drug resistant TB. As we now know, the TB HIV/AIDS link, nexus or combination causes certain morbidity and mortality worldwide," remarked the NUST Founding Vice-Chancellor, Dr Tjama Tjivikua.

Furthermore, Tjivikua said: "By aligning our energies and using innovative technologies, in addition to establishing a research culture, Namibia can become

a trailblazer on the African continent in terms of TB management and research."

One of the nine strategic objectives of the Ministry is to establish a TB Research Network by 2019. Not only does this align with the National Development Plan goals, to increase Namibia's human resources capital, it also promotes multi-sectoral engagement at various levels.

"Our planning needs to be informed by evidence-based research. The aim is to contribute to the global body of knowledge and hopefully this can lead to the production of new drugs that will permanently eradicate TB," said Ben Nangombe, Executive Director, MoHSS.

By means of this MoU, the parties will share research data, and staff and students will undergo TB-focused training. NUST, through the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences, is the founding member and driver of the Consortium.

## Short courses boost employability

The Reconstruction Living Labs Namibia (RLabs), under the auspices of the Namibia Business Innovation Institute, held its seventh graduation ceremony last semester. Approximately 70 unemployed young people were awarded certificates in various short courses.

The overall aim of the training was to equip the youth with much needed skills to increase their chances of entering the job market as entrepreneurs. The courses include, *Social Media Management, Project Management, Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Photography and Events Management.*

"Empowering young people and ensuring their participation at all levels will help them shape a better and more equitable future for all," noted the Executive Director of the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, Emma Kantema-Gaomas.

She added that: "Our youth are our most precious resource for national socio-economic and technological development. I am delighted that this cohort of graduates has sought alternative paths to

employment and a stable livelihood."

NUST actively encourages innovation and community engagement as part of its mandate and its vision to become, not only an entrepreneurial, but a world-class institution.

The Finnish government supports Namibia in creating new opportunities for young people and encouraging entrepreneurship, through funding initiatives such as RLabs.

The concept originated in South Africa in 2008 and to date it operates in 22 countries worldwide.

The courses are free of charge for unemployed youths and other members of the community, but organisations, businesses and entrepreneurs who require specialised training are charged.



Prof Pramanathan Govender, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation (front row, dressed in suit), pictured with NUST staff and the RLabs graduates.

### WANTED!

Ministries, and companies from the public or private sectors are invited to participate as exhibitors in the upcoming **NUST CAREER FAIR 2019**. The Fair, slated for March 2019, is an opportunity for exhibitors to give career guidance and scout for the best performing students and learners. Thousands of young people attend the event annually.

Kindly contact the following for registration and/or enquiries:

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NUST students and facilitators participating in the hands-on Employability Improvement Programme training.

## Employability Improvement Project on track

An agreement between NUST and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) resulted in the launch of the Employability Improvement Project (EIP) last year. To date, 50 undergraduate students have benefited from the project during its first phase of implementation. The Kaizen technique, a Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement of working practices and personal efficiency, is used to facilitate the programme. The main philosophical pillar of Kaizen is the idea that small improvements over time can be gradually accumulated, leading to substantial long-term results.

Prior to the implementation of the EIP at NUST, seven staff members were trained as facilitators. Thereafter, the Employability Improvement Project was launched and subsequently the handing over of the training kit materials valued at N\$250 000.

The project supports the existing Pre-Work Integrated Learning course at NUST that includes a component of hands on practical employability skills training.

The EIP has been implemented in six technical universities in South Africa, namely, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Central University of Technology, Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, Vaal University of Technology and University of Johannesburg.