Preserving cultural wealth for future generations

The 24th NUST Cultural Festival took place this week, an event that has become one of the biggest highlights on the University’s calendar. As per tradition, the five-day festivities included a flea market, international cuisine, traditional performances, the Mr and Miss NUST pageant. NUST is home to more than 700 international students from more than 25 countries across the globe as well as local students from different backgrounds. The festival therefore, serves as a platform to celebrate this diversity.

Entertainment
Several traditional groups performed throughout the week, representing cultures from mainly the African continent, including a group from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). CPUT attends the event annually. One of the evenings during the week, featured a theatrical production of a play produced under the University’s Protect, Preserve and Promote Indigenous Cultures and Languages (P3ICL) project. Currently, through the Faculty of Human Sciences, a team of researchers is gathering data from various indigenous groups countrywide, such as the San and the Ovambadja. The aim is to contribute to the preservation of indigenous cultures and languages. The project is funded by the European Union.

A word from the minister
During the Official Opening Ceremony, the Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service, Hon Agnes Tjongarero delivered the keynote address, on behalf of the Minister, Hon Erastus Uutoni. “We all have a fundamental role to play in ensuring that the future generations not only know, but respect and accept their cultural heritage. It is of the essence that we take pride in who we are and where we come from. Our culture is our wealth and if we do not preserve it, we lose our identity and without an identity, we cannot claim to have a sense of direction,” she remarked. Hon Uutoni is an alumni of the University.

Girls and women encouraged to choose careers in engineering

The second annual Namibian Women in Engineering (NAMWIE) Conference took place recently in Ongwediva, under the theme: ‘Namibian Women Engineers Transforming the Future.’

The conference presented a platform for more than 140 policymakers, female engineers, students and high school learners, to network and discuss empowerment of the girl child through education in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, amongst others.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, delivered the keynote address and she appealed to all senior female engineers to mentor upcoming female engineers. The Deputy Minister of Works and Transport, Honorable Sankwasa James Sankwasa, commended the efforts being made by NAMWIE in assisting the government in realising the national development goals.

Namibia is one of 93 countries that has joined the UN Women program of ‘STEP IT UP’ for Gender Equality ‘PLANET 50-50’ by 2030. The percentage of Namibia’s female population is reported to be 51.37 percent, with 44 percent households being headed by this group, according to the 2016 World Bank Collection of Development Indicators.

At the conference, young established female engineers shared their success stories of how they entered this male-dominated field. Their messages inspired students and learners in attendance, to follow-suit and persevere against all odds. The conference was organised by NAMWIE, with support from the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO, Nampower Foundation, the NAMWIE Student Chapter at NUST and the University of Namibia.

The Nampower Foundation pledged its support to the initiative, by availing a cheque valued at N$ 75 000.