



# NUST BRIEF

## Enabling the less abled entrepreneurs

NUST's Centre for Enterprise Development (CED), in collaboration with the National Disability Council of Namibia (NDCN) and Old Mutual Namibia, recently facilitated entrepreneurial training for persons living with disabilities. Old Mutual injected a considerable cash amount of N\$450 000 into the project, for a period of three years.

Eight students in the Omusati Region, received training in various areas such as business, financial, and marketing management. The objective of the initiative is to capacitate less privileged persons with knowledge on how to start and operate small businesses in a sustainable way, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. "People are living with 100% eyesight, yet they have no vision. People can walk and run, but have no mission. A large portion of the population can hear perfectly, but they do not listen, while those who are able, do not act. Thus, I extend my admiration to those that act despite their circumstances," Ms Mauriza Fredericks, Old Mutual's Manager: Communications and Social Responsibility.

Justina Uuyani, one of the graduates, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity. "I have a chicken business at my homestead, and with the knowledge I acquired, I believe that I can now run my business better," she said.

The programme has been running since 2014 where the NDCN embarked on a project to empower persons with disabilities. "So far, we have trained over 150 participants in areas such as Windhoek, Nkurenkuru and Gobabis. The overall goal is to equip participants with the knowledge they need to start and operate their businesses in a sustainable manner," remarked Godwin Chisenga, the Director of CED.



Eight students who graduated from the programme in the Omusati Region, proudly showcasing their certificates.

### From Omaruru to E-Haus

He grew up in the dusty streets of Omaruru, a small town in the Erongo Region, with about 14 000 inhabitants. At the age of nine, he lost his mother, but this did not discourage him from having big dreams. Even then, he knew he was destined for greatness. Dr Eroid Naomab recently assumed the position of NUST Vice-Chancellor, and ironically, his office is located in Elizabeth-Haus, an iconic building that has been standing since the 1900s, thus symbolising tenacity. He recently had an interview with NUST FM.

**Q. Tell us briefly about your upbringing.**

A. I did not have an easy childhood. It was so difficult, that at times, around age ten, eleven, I had to do odd jobs to supplement income at home. Despite that, I had a wonderful upbringing because of my extended family which is quite close-knit.

Thereafter, the basis of my academic career started at UNAM. I obtained four qualifications in a span of eight to nine years, and that took me across the globe. I went to New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Europe, China, and the United States of America.

I have always been the top performing student irrespective of each institution I studied at. Sometimes we underestimate how well and how rounded we are in terms of our education. It is only when you are exposed internationally that you realise you have the necessary foundation to compete with anyone in the world.

**Q. Did you have any social life when you were a student?**

A. I had a wonderful social life. One has to find a way to bring the necessary balance between one's intellectual capability and your personal attributes. Very early in my career, I realised that I needed to work on myself; my emotional intelligence and so forth.

You have to work on your emotional intelligence because that is the basis of your growth.

**Q. What are your thoughts on access to education for disadvantaged students?**

A. Things have to change, and I am saying that out of personal experience. Despite the fact that I have done extremely well at high school and managed to qualify for university entrance, I did not have the money to go directly into university.

I understand the importance of having the necessary mechanisms and support for disadvantaged students because at the end of the day, education is what we use to leverage the cost of poverty in our communities. The broader the access, the more we can influence change in our communities.

It is not just a university issue, but a stakeholder one too. It depends on the private sector, the government, and the higher education sector to come on board and create the necessary and enabling environment for all those talented young people out there who are aspiring to enroll at a university.

**Q. What message would you like to send to the student body?**

A. As a student, you should already be thinking about what greater purpose you want to serve with the knowledge and skills that you are going to gain out of the university. This is important, because during your course of learning, you also begin to see how you would play the role as a productive citizen. So, it is influence with a greater purpose to do greater good.

I would also like to encourage students to take personal accountability for their learning and their career. The university is there to support and continue to engage the systems that are in place, and of course the support structures that are in place.

### FRAME Project awards first scholarships

Last year, 206 students from across the African continent applied for scholarships through the Fostering Research and Intra-African knowledge transfer through Mobility and Education (FRAME) project. Twelve Masters and eight Doctoral students, who were selected in the first cohort, will pursue studies at the Universities of Buea in Cameroon; Free State in South Africa; Hawassa in Ethiopia, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and NUST. Two PhD students in Natural Resources Management and Engineering programmes, will be hosted at NUST.

Dr Lameck Mwewa, an academic in the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences and the FRAME Project Coordinator at NUST, is optimistic that all selected students will commence their studies in March 2021. This is despite the challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall aim of the FRAME project is to enhance human capital development in Africa with its main objective of focusing on staff and students' skills and competence improvement through enhanced mobility on the continent. FRAME strives to implement Masters and Doctoral level programmes and staff mobilities, by

encouraging African students to undertake studies in specialised fields such as water, energy, and food security. NUST will host a total of 16 students and staff over the next four years out of 60 mobility scholarships across all partners. The mobility scholarship covers tuition, travel and visa, insurance, research, and monthly stipends to cover living expenses.

The FRAME project, jointly managed by the European Commission through the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency and the African Union Commission, is funded as part of the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme Initiative.



# FRAME

Fostering Research & Intra-African  
knowledge transfer through  
Mobility & Education



Dr Eroid Naomab, right, in the NUST FM studio with Ms Delila Katanga, left, the presenter.