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Education and Nation Building Since Independence

As Namibia prepares to celebrate another Independence Day, education remains one of the most effective tools the country has utilised to improve society since 1990. The Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts, and Culture (MEIYSAC) highlights various milestones that show how education has helped to build the nation and empower young people over the last three decades.

Expanding Access to Education

One of the most notable achievements since independence has been the expansion of access to education. Policy reforms have removed financial barriers that previously prevented many learners from attending school.

The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 2013 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2016 abolished compulsory tuition and examination fees. These policies significantly increased enrolment across the country, making education more accessible to children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This progress was further reinforced by the Basic Education Act of 2020, which places the learner at the centre of the education system and strengthens the constitutional right to free and compulsory education. As a result, Namibia has achieved near-universal primary school enrolment, while the number of schools has grown from 1,325 in 1992 to more than 2,000 by 2024.

Closing the Gender Gap

Namibia has also made remarkable progress in achieving gender equality in education. At the primary level, enrolment between boys and girls is now nearly equal. In some cases, female learners are even outperforming their male counterparts in terms of retention.

Policies such as the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy ensure that young mothers are able to return to school and complete their education. As a result, survival rates for female learners from Grade 6 to Grade 12 now exceed those of males, reflecting a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Strengthening Literacy and Numeracy

To address challenges related to foundational learning, the Ministry has implemented several evidence-based programmes focused on early education.

Namibia has gained recognition across Africa for its implementation of Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar, programmes designed to strengthen reading and language skills in the early grades. Thousands of teachers have been trained in these methods, while learning materials are distributed annually to over 90,000 Grade 1 learners.

Additionally, initiatives such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) focus on grouping learners based on their learning abilities rather than age or grade level, helping improve numeracy outcomes. Tools like the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) have also helped shift education planning toward evidence-based decision making.

Promoting Inclusive Education

Since independence, Namibia has placed increasing emphasis on ensuring that no learner is left behind. The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013) has played a major role in integrating learners with disabilities into mainstream schools.

Access for learners with disabilities has increased significantly, rising from 30,873 learners in 2015 to more than 105,000 by 2021. The Ministry has also established specialised resource schools and support units, while increasing funding to support learners with special educational needs.

Supporting Learners Beyond the Classroom

One of the most impactful initiatives is the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP). What began in 1991 with just 500 learners has grown to serve more than 461,000 learners across 1,514 schools today. The programme ensures that learners receive nutritious meals, helping to improve concentration and school attendance.

Subsidized Tertiary Education

Namibia has implemented the Students' Subsidized Tertiary Education Funding Model, which aims to lower financial barriers for students seeking their first qualifications.

Under this arrangement, students do not have to pay registration or tuition fees for their primary undergraduate qualifications, which range from NQF Levels 5 to 8, including Honours degrees. The funding model also applies to vocational training centres, with curricula ranging from NQF Levels 1 to 6.

Information contributed by Ms. Ayesha Wentworth, Director for Programmes Quality Assurance at MEIYSAC.



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Education, Independence and Pride: UNAM Students Shaping Namibia's Future

(By: Kimberley-Rose Madzima)

Education represents one of the most significant benefits of independence, offering the tools to grow personally, contribute to society and help shape the future of the nation.

We spoke with Sakarias Nangolo, the Student Representative Council (SRC) Vice President at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus of the University of Namibia, who also serves as the Congress Deputy President for all 12 UNAM campuses.

For Nangolo, the 36-year milestone represents a shift in responsibility for Namibia's younger generation. "For us, 36 years of independence represents the transition from liberation to realization. While our parents fought to be recognized as human beings in their own land, our generation's struggle has shifted toward economic emancipation and intellectual excellence. It is now our responsibility to ensure that the freedom won on the battlefield is felt in our classrooms, boardrooms and innovation hubs," he said.

He explains that independence opened doors that were once closed to many citizens under colonial rule. "Independence broke the chains of Bantu Education and the barriers that once restricted access to knowledge. Today, the University of Namibia stands as a testament to that progress.

We no longer study to be subordinates; we study to become architects of our own industries. Because of independence, a child from a rural village in Omusati or a township in Windhoek can pursue careers in medicine, engineering or law,".

For Nangolo, being Namibian is also deeply connected to the values that unite the country's diverse communities. "Being Namibian means carrying a spirit of resilience and Ubuntu. I am proud of our peace, which is a rare and valuable treasure on this continent.

I am also proud of our diversity and the way our people remain united despite our many cultures. To be Namibian is to know that although we are a small nation, our potential is limitless," he said.

As a student leader representing thousands of students across UNAM's campuses, Nangolo says his role has given him a broader perspective on leadership and national development.

"My role has taught me that leadership is about bridging gaps. It means ensuring that a student at a satellite campus feels just as heard and empowered as

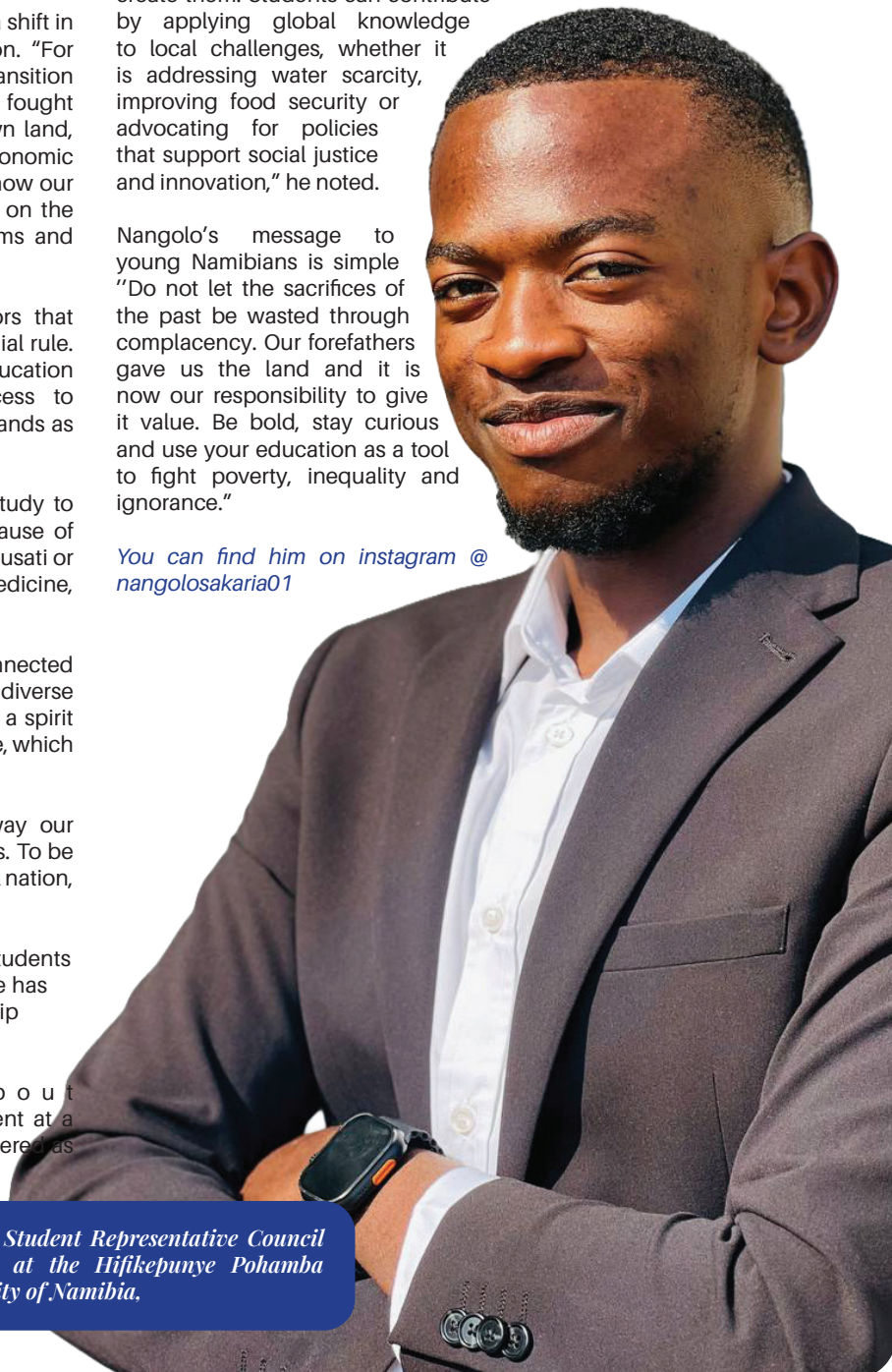
one at the main campus. UNAM is a reflection of Namibia itself. If we can foster unity, integrity and problem-solving across our 12 campuses, we are also helping to build a stronger nation," he said.

He believes students have a vital role to play in shaping Namibia's future, particularly by using education to address real challenges facing the country.

"Education should not only prepare students to find jobs; it should empower them to create them. Students can contribute by applying global knowledge to local challenges, whether it is addressing water scarcity, improving food security or advocating for policies that support social justice and innovation," he noted.

Nangolo's message to young Namibians is simple "Do not let the sacrifices of the past be wasted through complacency. Our forefathers gave us the land and it is now our responsibility to give it value. Be bold, stay curious and use your education as a tool to fight poverty, inequality and ignorance."

You can find him on [instagram @nangolosakaria01](#)



Sakarias Nangolo, the Student Representative Council (SRC) Vice President at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus of the University of Namibia.

Innovation and Technology: Students Building Namibia's Future

(By: Naemi Paulus)

NUST SRC for the School of Built Environment, Naemi Paulus, shared her view of the institution's driving force toward innovation, amid the upcoming Independence celebrations. She highlights how students are using research, technology, and entrepreneurship to address real challenges in Namibia and contribute to national development.

Practical Solutions for Real Problems

According to Paulus, NUST students actively develop practical solutions in areas like engineering, IT, and business. Many are working on projects such as mobile apps, digital platforms, and support systems for small businesses. These initiatives allow students to test ideas that directly address local problems, demonstrating how higher education can have a real impact beyond the classroom.

The Role of Technology

Technology is a key tool for innovation at NUST. Paulus mentioned that it helps improve efficiency, create jobs, and grow sectors like renewable energy and digital services. By equipping students with technical skills, the university ensures that young Namibians can compete both locally and globally.

Encouraging Innovation on Campus

NUST promotes innovation through research projects, innovation hubs, competitions, and industry collaborations. These opportunities allow students to develop solutions to real-world challenges while receiving guidance from mentors and industry partners. Paulus notes that these platforms are essential in turning ideas into tangible projects that can benefit communities and industries across Namibia.

Empowering Young Innovators

She further explained that students are encouraged to create businesses, develop new technologies, and find innovative solutions to issues such as unemployment and sustainability. By doing so, they strengthen



Naemi Paulus - NUST SRC for the School of Built Environment



Namibia's economy and reduce reliance on outside solutions.

Opportunities for Impact

Students have access to various initiatives such as entrepreneurship programs, innovation labs, mentorship schemes, funding competitions, and partnerships with industry. These programs give students the tools to transform their ideas into successful ventures or impactful projects that address pressing national challenges.

You can find Naemi Paulus on Instagram @_naemi_26

CAMPUS VOICES

Independence Edition



Eduardo - UNAM Hifikepunye Pohamba (HP) Campus

"Being a Namibia means living in peace and harmony. After so many years of independence, we've seen a smooth transition of power through our presidents."



Zoween Militayo - UNAM Eng. José Eduardo dos Santos (JEDS) Campus

"What I love about Namibia is that it's the only country where the desert meets the sea. It's the only country you can locate geographically with your hand and it is the land of the brave. Blood was shed for our independence."



Martina Mubita- NUST Eenhana Campus

"I'm a proud Namibian because we've come so far and because of the vast landscapes, various cultures, we are multilingual and united as a nation."



Hellena Abraham-NUST Eenhana Campus

"I'm proud to be Namibian because we are peaceful and united despite differences in cultures and religions. Mind you, we are the only country in the world where women occupy the Top 3 highest government positions."



Johanna Ashimbage- UNAM Eng. José Eduardo dos Santos (JEDS) Campus

"Im honestly obsessed with our landscapes, their world class but what sets us apart is our spirit. We have a way of making people feel like they've finally come home"



Paulina Haiduwa -NUST Eenhana Campus

"What makes me proud to be Namibian is because of the peace and stability in our country."

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Jonas Gabriel- UNAM Hifikepunye Pohamba (HP) Campus

"Being Namibian to me means loving my culture and respecting my people in all 11 ethnic groups"



Rejoice Shivuta-NUST Eenhana Campus

"What makes me a proud Namibian is the freedom of expression, you can be whoever you want to be in this country."

Youth Leadership and Democracy on Campus

(By: Otilie Andreas)

For Otilie Andreas, a student leader and passionate advocate for youth participation, Namibia's independence is more than a historical milestone; it is a living responsibility. As the country reflects on its democratic journey, she believes young people must understand their role in protecting and strengthening the freedoms that were hard-won.

From her perspective, Namibian Independence represents freedom, opportunity, and responsibility. It is a reminder that access to education, freedom of speech, and the right to participate in leadership structures were secured through sacrifice. For Otilie, independence is not only about celebrating the past, it is about shaping the future.

Encouraging Civic Engagement on Campus

Student leadership, she explains, plays a critical role in promoting civic awareness among young people. Through organized debates, awareness campaigns, leadership workshops, and community outreach programs, student leaders create safe platforms where students can voice their opinions and engage with national issues.

Otilie emphasizes that encouraging participation in student governance structures and democratic activities helps young people understand the importance of being active citizens. These experiences teach accountability, dialogue, and collaboration, skills essential for both campus leadership and national development.

Why Student Involvement Matters

According to Otilie, students are the leaders of tomorrow, and their involvement in democratic processes prepares them for that responsibility. Participation allows students to advocate for their rights, contribute to decision-making that affects education and youth development, and strengthen democratic values within society.

When students engage in leadership and governance, they not only gain confidence but also develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. These skills are vital in building a responsive and inclusive democracy.

The Role of Universities

Universities, she believes, must create environments that nurture

responsible citizenship. By supporting student leadership structures, promoting civic education, and encouraging community engagement, higher education institutions help shape informed and socially conscious graduates.

Otilie argues that universities are not just academic spaces, they are training grounds for leadership, innovation, and social responsibility. When students are empowered, they become active contributors to national progress.

Youth as Architects of the Future

Young people, Otilie concludes, are central to Namibia's development. Through innovation, leadership, and active participation in social and economic initiatives, the youth have the power to address national challenges and drive meaningful change.

She strongly believes that youth voices must be included in decision-making spaces. Their energy, creativity, and commitment are essential in building a stronger, more inclusive Namibia.

You can find Otilie on Instagram @otily...nelago



Otilie Andreas, a student leader and advocate for youth participation, - IUM

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Skills for Self-Reliance: Building Namibia Through Technical Training

(By: Isabel Alice)

As Namibia continues to grow and shape its future, young people play a critical role in driving development and innovation. Institutions like Namibia Institute of Technology are helping to equip students with the practical knowledge and technical skills needed to build a more self-reliant nation. In a world where industries are evolving rapidly, technical and vocational training is becoming one of the strongest foundations for economic independence and youth empowerment.

Technical and vocational skills contribute significantly to Namibia's economic independence because they focus on practical abilities that directly support industries and services within the country. From information technology and engineering to digital marketing and business development, these skills allow individuals to actively participate in the economy rather than rely solely on traditional employment opportunities. Skilled individuals are able to solve real problems, improve systems, and support the growth of local businesses and industries. This not only strengthens the workforce but also reduces dependency on external expertise, allowing Namibia to build and sustain its own capacity for development.

Skills development is also extremely important for youth empowerment. When young people are equipped with practical knowledge and hands-on training, they gain confidence in their ability to create opportunities for themselves. Instead of feeling limited by unemployment challenges, skilled youth can explore different paths such as entrepreneurship, freelancing, or innovation within existing industries. Education that focuses on skills helps young people understand that they are not just preparing for jobs, they are preparing to contribute meaningfully to society and shape the future of their country.

At Namibia Institute of Technology, students are prepared to contribute to national industries through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application. Courses are designed to reflect the real demands of the workplace, allowing

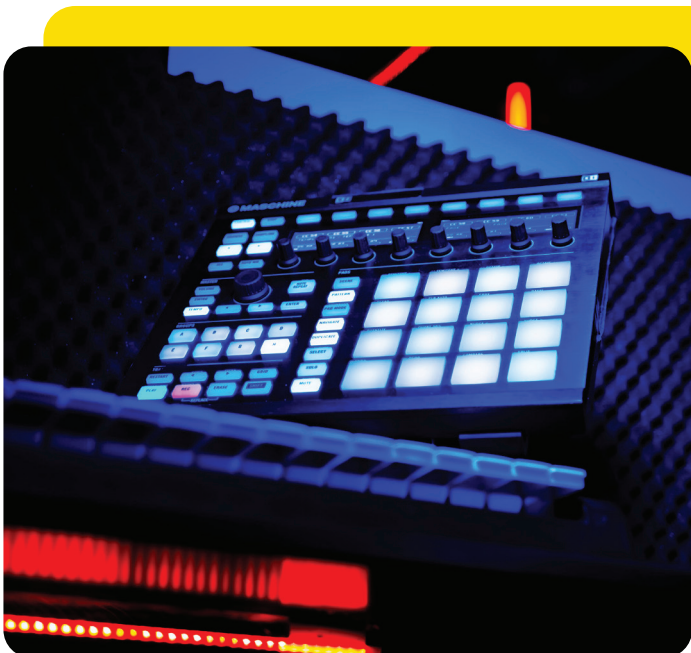


students to develop both technical competence and critical thinking skills. By working on practical assignments, projects, and presentations, students gain experience that prepares them to enter professional environments with confidence. This type of training ensures that graduates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying what they have learned to real-world situations.

Students are also encouraged to think beyond traditional employment and consider entrepreneurship as a viable path. Many programmes emphasize creativity, problem-solving and innovation, which naturally lead students to explore business opportunities. Whether it is starting small ventures, offering services within their communities, or using digital platforms to create income streams, students are reminded that they have the potential to create employment not only for themselves but for others as well. This mindset is essential in building a strong and resilient economy.

Technical graduates therefore play a very important role in building a stronger Namibia. By applying their skills, they contribute to the development of industries, support local businesses, and bring new ideas that improve productivity and innovation. When skilled young people actively participate in the economy, they help create a cycle of growth that benefits communities and the nation as a whole.

As Namibia celebrates its identity and independence, the role of skilled youth becomes even more significant. The future of the country does not only depend on policies or resources, it depends on the abilities, ideas and determination of the next generation. When young people are equipped with the right skills and the confidence to use them, they become more than graduates; they become builders of a stronger, more self-reliant Namibia.



Expanding Opportunities: Higher Education and Namibia's Future

(By: Simeon Simon)

As Namibia continues to reflect on its journey since independence, higher education remains one of the most powerful tools for shaping the nation's future. Over the years, the country has made significant progress in expanding access to tertiary education, ensuring that more young people are equipped to contribute meaningfully to national development.

A System Transformed

Since gaining independence in 1990, Namibia has transformed its higher education landscape from a fragmented and restrictive system into one built on equity, inclusivity, and opportunity. There has been a steady increase in the number of institutions, alongside a deliberate effort to decentralize education, allowing students from different regions to access quality learning without having to relocate to major urban centres.

Financial support systems and growing partnerships between the public and private sectors have also played a key role in reducing barriers to entry. As a result, higher education is no longer a privilege for a few, but an opportunity accessible to a broader segment of Namibian society.

Shaping Nation-Builders

Institutions such as RiverHigher are positioning themselves as more than just centres of learning—they are incubators for future nation-builders. By integrating leadership, civic responsibility, and critical thinking into their academic culture, these institutions aim to produce graduates who are not only skilled, but also socially conscious.

Students are encouraged to think beyond academic success and consider how their knowledge can be used to address real challenges within their communities. This approach ensures that graduates leave with both qualifications and a strong sense of purpose.

Keeping Education Relevant

In a rapidly changing world, relevance is key. RiverHigher emphasizes industry-integrated learning, ensuring that academic programmes align with the current demands of the job market. Through continuous curriculum reviews and collaboration with private sector stakeholders and professional bodies, institutions are able to equip students with both technical expertise and essential soft skills.

This dynamic approach recognizes that the workforce is constantly evolving, and education must evolve with it. By staying aligned with industry needs, graduates are better prepared to transition into the workplace and contribute effectively from the start.

Empowering Youth for Economic Growth

Higher education plays a crucial role in transforming young people from job seekers into job creators. By fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation, institutions empower students to take initiative and explore new opportunities.

Research and innovation are also directed toward solving local challenges, such as water scarcity, digital transformation, and sustainable development. Through this, students are not only learning they are actively contributing to Namibia's growth and resilience.

A Call to the Next Generation

As Namibia celebrates its independence, the role of students in shaping the country's future cannot be overstated. Higher education is more than a personal journey, it is a national investment.

Simeon Simon is the Head of Engineering Student Representative Council at Riverhigher



Simeon Simon is the Head of Engineering Student Representative Council at Riverhigher

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Healthcare and Nation Building

(By: Sylvia Hashondali)

A strong and accessible healthcare system is critical not just for increasing residents' quality of life, but also for accelerating economic growth and ensuring long-term development. At the heart of this system are young Welwitchia students who recognise the importance of healthcare in Namibia.

Phillip Hafeni Haiduwa:

Training a robust workforce of healthcare professionals is a cornerstone of Namibia's national development, acting as both a social shield and an economic engine. By investing in the education of doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, the nation reduces its dependency on external aid and builds a self-reliant system capable of addressing local health challenges with cultural and linguistic precision. A healthy population is inherently more productive, leading to reduced workplace absenteeism and a more stable economy. Furthermore, placing skilled professionals in rural areas ensures that development is inclusive, bridging the gap between urban centers and remote communities to ensure that every Namibian, regardless of their location, can contribute to the country's collective growth and the realization of Vision 2030.

Phillip Hafeni Haiduwa is a final year student studying for a Certificate in Pharmacy.



Haikali Monika:

Students are the future of Namibia, and each one has the power to contribute to building a healthier nation. By studying hard, gaining knowledge, and developing strong values such as compassion, responsibility, and integrity, students can become professionals who truly care about the wellbeing of their communities. In the health field especially, every action matters from educating communities about disease prevention to providing quality care that improves people's lives. A healthier Namibia begins with informed and dedicated young people who are willing to serve, lead, and make positive changes. By using their education to uplift others, students can play a powerful role in strengthening the country's healthcare system and ensuring a better, healthier future for all Namibians.

Haikali Monika is a final year environmental health student.



Students are motivated by the different types of things they experience and encounter as they grow up. Some of the students are motivated by the desire of looking and caring for people which is self passion and within their nature to save others because they feel at peace on saving others and the community. Some students are motivated by their family members, such as seeing their family member experiencing illness. It gives them the desire to pursue a healthy care career in order to assist their relatives and prevent the illness from ongoing. When a student grow up in environment where they always value about health and always make sure to keep their environment safe for children safe for everyone it always more debate to them that one day the who pays you a career in Healthcare to give back to be a role model and to strengthen they heard in the community.

Pinto Laurinto Sapalo is a first year student studying for a Certificate in Pharmacy.



CAMPUS

Surviving Generational Trauma: Healing Beyond the Past

HEALTH

Generational trauma refers to trauma that is passed on from one generation to the next. It starts when a group goes through a catastrophic occurrence that creates economic, cultural, and familial pain. In reaction, persons in that group have physical or psychological problems.

How to Overcome Generational Trauma

- Practicing self-care
- Practicing self-care
- Accepting the trauma
- Learn to set boundaries
- Seeking professional support
- Work on being open to change
- Finding the root source of the trauma
- Allow yourself to grieve and process your emotions

Signs and Symptoms of Generational Trauma

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Emotional numbness
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Impaired life skills such as decision making

Then, subsequent generations may inherit trauma and these conditions through factors like discrimination and prejudice.

Did You Know?

Family communication plays a major role in how trauma is passed down. When trauma is not discussed openly, it can still affect children through behaviour patterns, emotional responses, and parenting styles.

Gillespie, C. (2025, November 5). Understanding how generational trauma impacts mental health. Health. <https://www.health.com/condition/ptsd/generational-trauma>

Effects of Generational Trauma on Students

- Fear of failure
- Pressure to succeed for the family
- Financial stress and responsibility
- Emotional patterns learned from home

Over it.

My Namibia, My Pride

(By: Kimberley-Rose Madzima)

Independence has given Namibia's youth a platform to dream big, lead boldly and contribute to the nation's growth. For Sheya Nangombe, Student Representative Council (SRC) for Internal Affairs at Triumphant College, being Namibian means taking pride in the country and embracing its rich heritage. He believes independence has created opportunities for young people to shape the nation through leadership, education and innovation.

Reflecting on Namibia's journey since independence, Nangombe says the milestone represents both progress and responsibility for the younger generation.

"Namibia celebrates 36 years of independence and this is no small feat. We're taking steps into oil and gas, youth empowerment programs and poverty eradication. Unemployment is still a lingering reality but as a young Namibian leader I believe with my whole heart we will find a plan."

For Nangombe, being Namibian carries a strong sense of patriotism and responsibility.

"Being Namibian means being a patriot and being willing to carry responsibility for the Namibian people. Our forefathers fought for the ideal of a free and educated Namibia and I am proud to be a son of the Namibian nation." He believes independence has opened doors for young people in education and leadership.

"Independence is a symbol of hope and courage. It reminds us that systems which once limited our people, such as Bantu Education, have been dismantled. Today, every Namibian has the right to education and the opportunity to pursue their ambitions," he explained.

As a student leader at Triumphant College, Nangombe encourages fellow students to use education and community engagement as tools for positive change.

"We encourage students to think about how they can contribute to their communities and the country. Education plays a crucial role in this. The opportunity to study and gain knowledge is something that can empower young people to build solutions and create opportunities for others," he noted.

Reflecting on the sacrifices made by previous

generations, Nangombe says his father's story reminds him of the responsibility young people carry today.

"My father went to war at the age of 25, and I am that same age now. It makes me reflect on how I can show that what he fought for still lives on," he said.

Nangombe believes young people must be brave enough to take initiative and shape the nation's path forward.

"Be brave enough to take the first step, be brave enough to start your first business and be brave enough to finish that degree."

"Happy Independence Day Namibia! And to my mother, look meme, ondili mo magazine!"

You can find him on Instagram
@shey_nangombe



Sheya Nangombe, Student Representative Council (SRC) for Internal Affairs at Triumphant College,

NUST Film Week: A Celebration of Namibian Creativity and African Storytelling

(By Kimberley-Rose Madzima)

The Department of Digital Arts and Animation, in partnership with the Namibia Film Commission, hosted the annual Film Week at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), which took place from 12 to 15 March 2026 in the Science and Technology Building

The event celebrated Namibian creativity and African storytelling, bringing together filmmakers, students and audiences for four days of film screenings, industry discussions and professional development.

This year, Film Week received an impressive 656 film submissions across various categories, including student productions. Of these, 64 were homegrown Namibian films, highlighting the growing talent and diversity within the country's film industry.

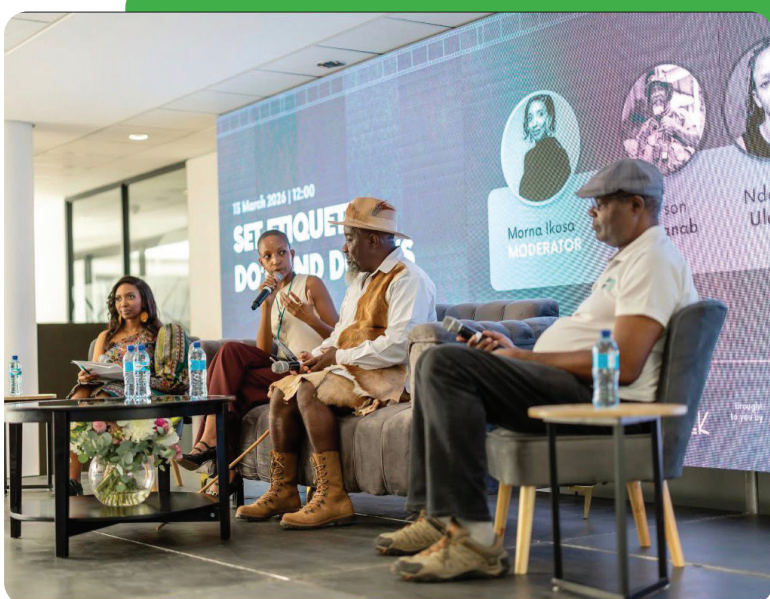
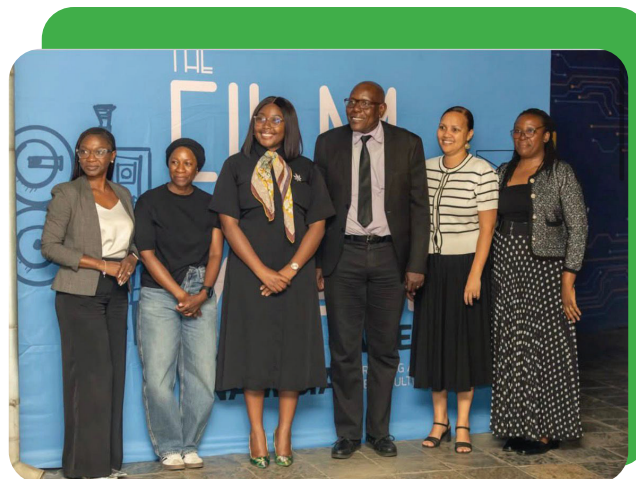
Following a competitive selection process, 159 films were chosen for screening, featuring productions from across Africa, including Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

At the official opening, Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof Andrew Niikondo expressed appreciation to the Namibia Film Commission for sponsoring ten scholarships aimed at supporting students from marginalised and underrepresented communities. The scholarships will allow recipients to pursue short courses in scriptwriting, film and animation.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Hon Emma Theofelus, highlighted the importance of storytelling in shaping national identity.

"Film is far more than entertainment. It is a powerful tool for cultural expression, economic development and national identity," she said.

She further noted that the creative industry has been recognised by President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as one of Namibia's priority sectors for innovation, employment creation and cultural diplomacy.



In addition to screenings, the program offered panel discussions on niche content creation and film policy, as well as two professional development workshops: Production Budgeting and Taxation with Money Penny Films, which provided practical guidance on building realistic budgets, keeping compliant records and navigating tax obligations.

Film Marketing and Publicity with Sinema Films SA, offering insights on planning, budgeting and promoting films effectively from development to release.

The Film Week continues to create a national platform for African filmmakers, industry professionals and audiences to celebrate Namibian filmmaking while providing valuable opportunities for networking, professional insight and skills development.

The Promise That Still Negotiates

(By: Eva-Rakel Johannes)



Every year, independence arrives in Namibia with a ceremony, flags lifted into the March sky, and a collective pause to remember how far we have come. But when the music fades and the day settles into ordinary life, a quieter question lingers for many young Namibians (or so I'd like to think): what does it actually mean to be free now?

In 1990, independence was unmistakable. It was visible in the lowering of one flag and the raising of another, in the return of exiles, in the first elections held under a new constitution. It was, in every sense, a moment of arrival. The struggle, carried by the brave men and women of the liberation struggle, marked by tragedies such as Cassinga, and sustained by generations who refused to accept subjugation, had culminated in something tangible: a sovereign nation.

But independence, as Aristotle might suggest, is not a static achievement. It is a condition that must be examined, lived, and, at times, questioned. "The unexamined life is not worth living," he wrote. One might extend this to nations: the unexamined freedom risks becoming symbolic rather than substantive.

For the younger generation, independence is both real and incomplete. We move freely, speak openly, and participate in democratic processes - privileges that were once denied. Yet these freedoms exist alongside a more complicated reality. Namibia remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, with a persistently high Gini coefficient and youth unemployment rate that continues to shape the life chances of many.

This is where the meaning of independence begins to shift. It is no longer solely about political liberation; it is about economic participation, access, and dignity. It is about whether the ability to vote is matched by the ability to build a life. For many young Namibians, the gap between these two forms of freedom is where frustration quietly grows. History offers perspective but also warning. Across post-colonial Africa, the euphoria of independence often gave way to what scholars describe as a "second struggle" one not against foreign rule, but against inequality, exclusion, and the slow consolidation of power among 'elites'. Namibia has, in many respects, maintained stability and avoided the extremes seen elsewhere. Yet stability alone cannot be the endpoint of independence.

As Frantz Fanon cautioned, true liberation requires more than the transfer of political authority; it demands the transformation of social and economic structures. Without this, independence risks becoming ceremonial; honoured annually, but unevenly experienced. And yet, there is something quietly powerful about the present moment. A generation has emerged that did not inherit fear as its primary condition. Young Namibians create, critique, and imagine with a confidence that would have been difficult under colonial rule. Independence, in this sense, has become less visible precisely because it has become embedded in the everyday.

Still, humour often reveals what politics obscures. For some, independence today feels a bit like owning a house with a bond still attached - you hold the title deed, yes, but the terms of ownership remain constrained. The country is ours, but the conditions under which many live in it are still being negotiated.

This is not a rejection of independence. It is, rather, an insistence that its meaning must evolve. To honour the past is not to freeze it in time, but to build upon it with honesty. The generation of 1990 secured Namibia's voice. The responsibility of today's generation is to decide what that voice will confront and whether it will speak only in celebration, or also in challenge. Because independence, ultimately, is not just something we commemorate. It is something we must continuously make real.

Eva-Rakel Johannes is a NQF8 Journalism and Media Technology student at the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

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Language, Culture, and National Identity

(By Délcio Da Cunha)

Language is more than just a medium of communication; it is the foundation of cultural identity. In Namibia, a country rich in cultural diversity, language plays a critical role in preserving the traditions, histories, and values that define our communities. Through language, stories are passed down, customs are maintained, and a collective sense of belonging is nurtured. It is through our languages that the essence of Namibia's cultural heritage continues to thrive.

Mother tongues, in particular, hold a special place in preserving this heritage. They are powerful links that connect individuals to their ancestral roots and cultural traditions.

For young people, embracing and valuing their mother tongues is essential in maintaining this connection. When we speak and celebrate our native languages, we honour the wisdom and experiences of those who came before us. In doing so, we strengthen our identity and cultivate a deeper sense of pride in who we are and where we come from.

In a nation as diverse as Namibia, language education also plays an important role in fostering unity. Learning multiple languages, especially local languages, encourages greater understanding among different cultural groups.

It bridges divides, promotes mutual respect, and allows people from various backgrounds to communicate more effectively. By embracing multilingual education, we build a society that values inclusion and cultural exchange, creating stronger bonds within our communities.

Students have a significant role to play in preserving Namibia's cultural heritage. As young leaders and future custodians of our nation's traditions, students are uniquely positioned to promote language, celebrate cultural practices, and engage actively with their communities.

By participating in cultural initiatives, encouraging the use of indigenous languages, and sharing knowledge with peers, students contribute to keeping Namibia's cultural identity vibrant and alive.

At the same time, multilingualism offers valuable advantages in



today's interconnected world. Being able to communicate in more than one language enhances students' ability to navigate different cultural environments and broadens their academic and career opportunities.

It fosters deeper cultural understanding and equips young people with the skills needed to interact confidently in both local and global contexts.

As Namibia continues to grow and evolve, the preservation of our languages remains essential to safeguarding our cultural identity.

By valuing our mother tongues, promoting multilingual education, and encouraging students to actively engage with their heritage, we can ensure that the rich cultural tapestry of Namibia continues to flourish for generations to come.

Délcio Da Cunha, is the SRC Vice President for Lingua

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Freedom to Create: Celebrating Namibian Identity Through Fashion

(By: Kimberley-Rose Madzima)



Creativity has become a powerful way for young Namibians to express who they are and where they come from.

For Bertha N Daniel Kapolo, founder of Bergano Designs and a College of the Arts fashion design graduate, each piece created is more than just clothing. It is a way to celebrate Namibian culture, heritage and pride.

"Being Namibian as a creative means having the freedom to express our stories, cultures and identities through art and design. Namibia is a country rich in diversity, history and natural beauty and that inspires me as a designer. Independence reminds me that we have the power to define who we are and how we present ourselves to the world."

Namibian culture shapes Kapolo's work in every detail from storytelling and music to nature and different cultures. Her

designs blend modern silhouettes with cultural inspiration, creating pieces that feel both contemporary and rooted in identity. Elements such as structure, movement and craftsmanship reflect the richness of our heritage while still speaking to modern fashion. Designed to be worn with pride, purpose and presence.

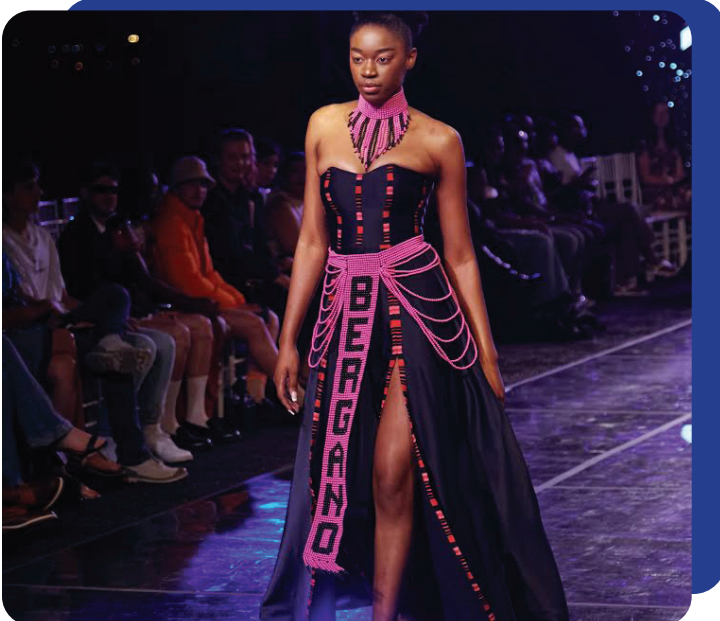
Her 2025 collection, "Refined Roots" explores the dialogue between tradition and modernity "Culture becomes form and fabric becomes voice. Through garments, I aim to communicate stories that people can connect with beyond words."

COTA provided the foundation for her technical skills and creative confidence. "Studying at COTA gave me the foundation to understand garment construction, design development and the discipline required in the fashion industry. Beyond the technical side, it also encouraged me to explore my identity as a designer and find my own voice.

It was a space where she could experiment, learn from her mistakes and grow into the creative behind Bergano. "The patience, calmness and understanding of the lecturers helped me explore my creativity. COTA's fashion department provides numerous opportunities to showcase your work, be more practical and build character." She believes young creatives play a crucial role in shaping Namibia's image both locally and internationally. "We are responsible for preserving our stories while also evolving them for future generations."

Her advice to aspiring creatives is simple but powerful: "Believe in your creativity and stay committed to your vision. Not everyone will support you but keep learning, improving and don't be afraid to start small. Passion and consistency make a difference."

Bertha N Daniel Kapolo is a fashion designer and founder of Bergano Designs. You can find her on instagram @bergano_designs





SENIOR CAMPUS





Crafting the Future: Hands That Build

(By Kimberley-Rose Madzima)

At the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (WVTC), young people are shaping Namibia's future with their hands and skills.

For Rita Iyaloo Leonard, a Joinery and Cabinet Making student, learning carpentry is more than just a trade. It's a way to create, contribute and show how Namibia's youth are actively building the country's future.

As Namibia celebrates 36 years of independence, Leonard says the milestone reminds her of the opportunities available to young people today.

"For me, it is a reminder of how far Namibia has come since independence. As a young vocational student, I feel grateful for the opportunities we have today to study and gain practical skills. It motivates me to work hard and use my skills to help develop our country and support my community."

Her passion for carpentry started with a love for working with her hands and creating things. Through her training, Leonard has gained both technical and personal skills including measuring and cutting wood accurately, using carpentry tools safely, designing and assembling furniture, as well as teamwork and problem-solving.

Although carpentry is often seen as a male-dominated field, Leonard says determination and skill matter more than gender.

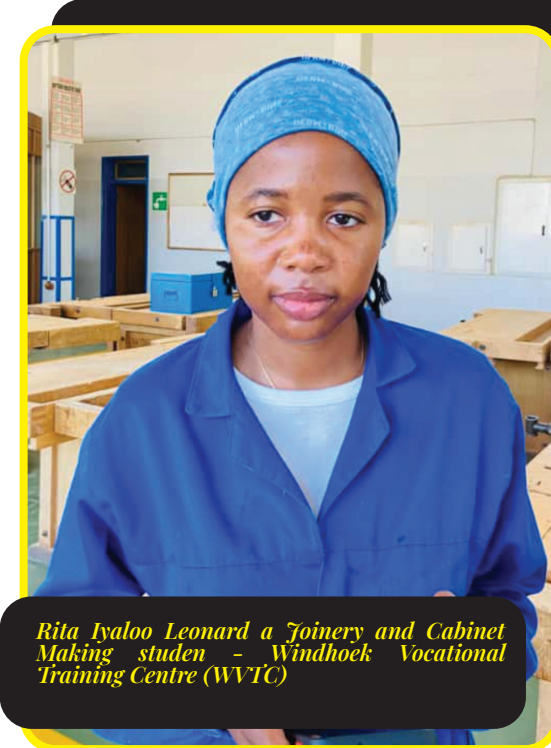
"Being in this trade has helped me grow in confidence and prove that women can also succeed in technical fields," she says.

She believes vocational skills play an important role in Namibia's development. "Carpenters help build homes, schools, furniture and many other things that people need every day. By training more young people in these skills, Namibia can create jobs, support small businesses and grow the economy."

Looking ahead, Leonard hopes to become a professional carpenter and eventually start her own carpentry business, while inspiring other young women to pursue vocational careers.

"My message is to believe in yourself and follow your passion. Skilled trades offer great opportunities. Women should not feel limited by stereotypes. With hard work and dedication, they can succeed in fields like carpentry, welding or construction" she says, proving that the hands shaping wood today may also be helping build the Namibia of tomorrow.

Rita Iyaloo Leonard is a Joinery and Cabinet Making student at Windhoek Vocational Training Centre. You can find her on instagram @iyaloo_200



Rita Iyaloo Leonard a Joinery and Cabinet Making student - Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (WVTC)

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Res Basketball Face Off

(By Kimberley-Rose Madzima)

Students gathered at the University of Namibia Main Campus court for an exciting Residence Basketball Face-Off, where teams from different campuses competed to see who runs the courts

The event brought together teams from UNAM Main Campus, UNAM Khomasdal Campus and UNAM Hage Geingob Campus, creating an atmosphere filled with excitement, cheers and friendly rivalry.

Hosted at the Main Campus court, the face-off attracted students who came out to support their residence teams with the UNAM Rubies cheerleading squad adding energy and spirit to the stands.

UNAM Khomasdal and Hage Geingob Basketball Clubs joined forces to compete against the UNAM Basketball Club (UBC) from Main Campus.

UNAM Main Campus (UBC Elite) secured a 79-46 victory over the combined Khomasdal and Hage Geingob team.

The event was more than just a basketball match. It was an opportunity for students from different campuses to connect, compete and celebrate campus life.

Throughout the evening, the teams battled it out on the court, showcasing teamwork, determination and athletic talent.





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