

# “Non-performers are killing the economy” – Dr Tjivikua

During this year’s Academic Welcome event, the NUST Founding Vice-Chancellor, Dr Tjama Tjivikua, placed emphasis on the need for the country’s workforce to play a meaningful role in shaping the Namibian economy.

“Non-performers are killing the Namibian economy. We cannot get out of this morass if we are not committed. You cannot always complain. Ask yourself, what am I doing for Namibia?” Tjivikua said. He further called on government to drive the economy with a benevolent dictatorship approach, whilst at the same time upholding the principles of democracy.

## Theme of the year

According to a report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterised by technologies that are blurring the divide among the physical, digital and biological spheres, such as artificial intelligence and robotics. However, these developments have sparked concerns on how to embrace the changes and at the same time create new opportunities. It is against this background that the Institution’s theme for the 2019 Academic Year is ‘*Catalysing Youth Empowerment for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.*’

“We must not see machines as a threat. We must reinvent our economies to create new jobs and embrace this revolution,” remarked Tjivikua.

Mandela Kapere, the Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Council of Namibia was one of the speakers at the event and he shared similar sentiments with the Vice-Chancellor. “We need to

develop a breadth of skills, more than just functional literacy, numeracy and general knowledge. These must extend to cognitive, creative and emotional skills, particularly problem-solving and collaboration,” he said.

## The role universities play

“The role of a university to create a more equal society is fundamental. We really have to focus on bringing underrepresented students into the system,” said Prof Ahmed Bawa, the CEO of Universities South Africa (USAF), who delivered the keynote address at the event.

Prof Bawa gave insight into the various roles universities play in shaping the way humanity engages the future. “It is pivotal for tertiary education institutions to produce new knowledge. Producing graduates is not enough. Graduates must leave a university as wholesome citizens who are ready to play their part in nation building,” he added.



FROM LEFT: Prof Ahmed Bawa, CEO: Universities South Africa (USAF); Dr Tjama Tjivikua, NUST Founding Vice-Chancellor, and Mandela Kapere, Executive Chairperson: National Youth Council of Namibia.



Bianca Tjizumaue, Lecturer: Department of Marketing and Logistics (front row, far right), pictured with students in Berlin, Germany.

## Sharing notes in marketing and logistics

Fifteen (15) students and a lecturer travelled to Germany recently, as part of a partnership agreement between NUST and the Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, as well as the Aachen University of Applied Sciences. The group is from the Department of Marketing and Logistics in the Faculty of Management Sciences.

The aim of the visit was for the students and the lecturer to learn best practices from the two German universities, in areas such as marketing, logistics, manufacturing, intercultural communication and business strategies, amongst others. Their itinerary largely consisted of the students attending various workshops and lectures on these topics.

“The entire trip was such a memorable experience and attending interactive classes with local students exposed us to different German traditions,” said Fesse Amunyela, one of the students. Another, Werner Joba, was excited about the different sites they visited such as a plant in Aachen that manufactures electric cars. “The presentation and the tour of the site was very enticing and really eye-opening. We were even allowed to sit in the self-driving car,” he said. In addition, the group also had the opportunity to visit a number of tourist attractions during the trip, within and beyond Germany’s borders. Upengisa Kaundje was

particularly fascinated by the trip to Paris: “The popular Eiffel Tower was one of the best tourist attractions we visited, it is such a classy monument. It was surely a lifetime experience!” she said.

Their lecturer, Bianca Tjizumaue, said: “I have learned a lot and the students surely received great practical exposure which will definitely make them more industry ready. Furthermore, I believe the international trip really broadened our knowledge thus enabling us to play our part in making NUST a world-class university.”

The 11-day study trip was facilitated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). NUST currently has numerous memoranda of understanding with German universities, of which the DAAD has been instrumental in the establishment and funding of many partnerships and projects.

This is one of the biggest groups from NUST that has travelled to Europe through these partnerships.

## Study finds most ‘Tombo’ drinkers earn less than N\$500

Students of the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences, conducted a survey to investigate the alcohol content in the home-brewed beverage commonly referred to as ‘Tombo,’ as well as its impacts on social-economic and health aspects. The report is titled ‘*Socio-Economic and Potential Health Effects Associated with Tombo and Alcohol Consumption in Katutura and Soweto.*’

The researchers, at Bachelor’s level of their studies, are from the departments of Mathematics and Statistics, Natural and Applied Sciences, and Environmental Health Sciences. The survey was directed towards consumers and brewers.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to provide an equal chance to all population members to be included in the study. There was a total of 130 respondents.

Amongst the main findings, it was revealed that 54.2% of the respondents earned less than N\$500 per month, further revealing that most Tombo brewers are in this business to try to make ends meet and to support their families. Forty percent (40%) of the consumers were aged between 35-45 years.

Additionally, Tombo samples were collected from different outlets and analysed for their acidity (pH) and alcohol content. The samples were analysed for the presence of any microorganisms but the ones identified could not be associated to common health ailments. However, the Staphylococcus

lentus was one of the identified microorganisms. It is a pathogen in humans associated with infections in animals, which would imply poor hygiene practices during Tombo production.

In addition, saliva involved in sharing of drinking from the same Tombo glass, salivary transfer of germs occur. Common infections that could be transmitted are strep throat, the common cold, and mumps.

According to the Project Coordinator, Martha Namutuwa: “The study gave the students an opportunity to work on a real-life problem-based learning project. In addition, their employability skills such as teamwork, communication, critical, analytical, social skills were strengthened as they now fully understand some social challenges that low-income communities face.”

Upon successful completion of the project, a detailed report was handed over to Hospice of Hope, a non-profit organisation that works on bettering the lives of disadvantaged communities.



Dr Seeham Khan, Dean: Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (sixth from left), pictured handing over the report to Rukla Kassa, Founder of Hospice of Hope (seventh from right). Others in the photo are staff from NUST and Hospice of Hope.