Three competitors, who have been entered to compete at the 2015 WorldSkills Competition, scheduled to take place in São Paulo, Brazil, in August, have left for South Korea to prepare for the bi-annual event. They are Rakel Kagwedha Ndinowike Amutenya (Bricklaying); Joseph Nghidipohamba Nakatumbe (Carpentry & Joinery); and Erkana Imene (Plumbing and Pipeheating).

Amutenya is the only female team member and is a trainee at the NamWater Human Resources Development Centre outside Okahandja. Nakatumbe is enrolled at the Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT), whereas Imene is a trainee at the Rundu Vocational Training Centre.

Amutenya, Nakatumbe and Imene are to attend an intensive training preparation session with members of the South Korean team, while Mathias (Electrical Installations), who is a trainee at the NamPower Training Centre, has just returned from a similar training session with an experienced South African training institution, in that country.

In his sending-off message to the competitors, who are accompanied by skills experts in each of these disciplines, NTA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Jerry Beukes, called on Namibians from all walks of life to rally behind the team. “Our maiden participation in WorldSkills International is indeed a proud and historical moment, not only for the local technical and vocational training fraternity, but for our country as a whole. As such, these young Namibians deserve our full support”, he emphasised. Beukes also encouraged the competitors to serve as true ambassadors for their country. “Go to South Korea with a consciousness of teamwork and togetherness. Give your trainers your full support and cooperation. Be disciplined, responsible, passionate, committed and dedicated”, he emphasised.

Beukes also acknowledged UNESCO, through its Better Education for Africa’s Rise (BEAR) Project, for financial and technical support being rendered towards the competitors’ preparations in South Korea and South Africa.

WorldSkills International (WSI) is an international skills competition, held in a different member country every two years. Competitors from 17 to 22 years old demonstrate their excellence in a number of different skilled trades and technology contest areas. It will be the first time for a Namibian team to participate at this prestigious event.

The 43rd WorldSkills Competition will take place at Anhembi Parque, São Paulo, Brazil, from 11 to 16 August 2015.
SACC APPROVES REGISTRATION OF MORE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

The NTA’s Standards Assessment and Certification Council (SACC) recently approved the registration and/or expansion of scope of seven local training institutions. The newly registered institutions are African Leadership Institute; Eenhana Vocational Training Centre; Okakarara Vocational Training Centre; International Training College Lingua; and the DAPP Vocational Training School. Currently registered institutions whose applications for the expansion of training scopes were approved are the Institute of Open Learning for its Keetmanshoop, Walvis Bay, Ongwediva, Rundu and Katima Mulilo branches and Monitronic Success College for its Otjiwarongo, Ondangwa and Walvis Bay branches.

The NTA’s Quality Assurance Manager, Ian Gicheru told The Stakeholder that he was delighted with the new additions to the list of registered training institutions and encouraged the respective centre leadership teams to do their utmost in ensuring that quality training standards are maintained in all their course offerings. “As training institutions, they need to appreciate that managing quality becomes fundamental to all training activities and programmes. As such, they should also appreciate that if quality is ensured in all their training activities, it should result in their trainees graduating from their institutions being valued and appreciated by the labour market as competent, skilled and fit-for-purpose”, he explained.

According to Gicheru, high quality training remains at the heart of the Regulations for the Registration of VET Providers. “In as much as the regulations empower the NTA to protect and safeguard Namibians against sometimes unscrupulous entities wanting to make a quick buck under the guise of so-called recognised courses, our national VET system sets clear expectations for registered training organisations to take responsibility for the quality of their programmes and services. We deem the enforcement of the regulations as an integral part of our continuous quality improvement drive under a shared vision in which all stakeholders will value our organisation as our country’s true port of call for vocational skills, because they will have full confidence in the quality of Vocational Education and Training outcomes delivered by registered Namibian training organisations”, he stressed.

He encourages all non-registered training institutions to visit the Quality Assurance Division and learn more about the registration regulations, key registration requirements and timeframes.

FROM THE ACTING CEO’S DESK

Greetings!

Looking back at developments at the NTA over the past few years, one has to express a sense of pride in being part of a team that has made such decisive strategic strides towards the establishment of a relevant national VET regime.

Much of our success can be ascribed to a positive organisational culture driven by our values of Responsiveness, Accountability, Integrity, Service Delivery and Excellence.

We appreciate the importance of the contributions of employees to our business. They enfranchise our core values and are key performers for our organisation in the implementation of our rolling five-year Strategic Plan. They live these values with genuineness and passion. They walk the talk and as such are the key performers in our successes.

We will continue to nurture a culture of teamwork, cohesion and harmony in which all our employees can thrive in living our values and raising the bar in VET.

Yours in Vocational Education and Training,

Jerry Beukes

STAFF STAKE-OUT

SH: Tell us more about Lusia Shikongo away from the office?
Whether at home or at the office, I remain the same. Humble, reserved, blessed with a loving husband and a beautiful child. I enjoy playing games with my daughter (it makes both of us laugh). I spend most of my time at home doing housekeeping. I’m a God fearing person and it makes me feel good when I round off my week by going to church on Sundays.

SH: What is interesting about your job as VET Standards and Qualifications Development Coordinator?
To excel in this job, one has to be very conversant with the NQF Regulations and understand the needs of industry. The work I do is fundamental in creating a training system that is responsive to changing industry needs and which facilitates learning towards recognised qualifications.

SH: How would you describe the NTA work environment?
Dynamic and inspiring. I am part of a team that’s on the move. We have recorded a number of key accomplishments over recent years, and I believe that we will work even harder in overcoming our challenges and delivering a relevant VET regime for our country.

SH: Where do you see yourself in five years’ time?
I have grown very fond of the VET system, especially the current efforts to reform and transform it, and would still want to stay on board for some time.

SH: What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning?
I always start my day with a prayer to ask God for his guidance for the day that lies ahead.
The Board of Directors, at its meeting held in June 2015, gave the go-ahead for the implementation of a five-year rolling Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, and a first Bi-Annual Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

According to the Manager: Public Relations, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement, Mornay Louw (photo), the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is a focused attempt to align with expectations under the NTA’s rolling five-year Strategic Plan, as it elaborates on specific initiatives towards giving effect to the realisation of the organisation’s broad stakeholder engagement objectives.

“Whilst recognising the close interplay and link between our organisational interest and the broader societal interest, it leverages effective Stakeholder Engagement as a core and strategic consideration for the NTA in living up to its vision of becoming a true port of call for vocational skills, and in avoiding disappointment, recriminations and damaged relationships with the stakeholders we regard as essential to our business”, Louw explained.

The strategy recommends an approach under which, over the short to medium term, the NTA’s stakeholders are identified and defined, their expectations are listed, and then the gaps that exist in actual versus targeted performance levels in meeting these expectations, are addressed. It leverages a more balanced approach under which the expectations of all the important stakeholders are considered, and under which the degree to which these expectations are being met, are measured. It further includes specific recommendations and tactical applications under which key messages, frequencies and success measures are identified.

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is to be reviewed after every two years of implementation. The bi-annual reviews will be preceded by follow-up Stakeholder Perception and Satisfaction Surveys, which will apply the same sampling and research methodology as under a survey conducted in December 2014.

“Changing perceptions of stakeholders will not happen overnight. Therefore, as a ‘living’ document, the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is to be deemed an organisation-wide blueprint for the promotion of effective and efficient engagement practices for the medium to long term and should as such, through revisions, continue to remain a comprehensive enterprise aimed at securing fundamental change in prevalent societal perceptions about the NTA as an organisation, and the broader VET sector”, Louw emphasised.

According to Louw, this focus on balanced performance measures demonstrates the NTA’s appreciation that the application of data so derived in the formulation of implementation plans, would add significant value to tracking its stakeholder relations over time, and in focusing on performance improvement efforts. “The Strategy prioritises altogether twenty-five different stakeholder groups and recommends for inclusive and continuous dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders to be delivered at a level appropriate to the specific stakeholder group. It clearly outlines which stakeholder groups the organisation wants to engage with, what their expectations are of the organisation, and what the focus should be of such engagements”, he noted.

The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy also makes provision for the establishment of a Stakeholder Engagement Committee. As a monitoring and evaluation platform, the committee is to be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer.

Under the committee’s Terms of Reference, monthly meetings are to be conducted to evaluate the impact of engagement activities and quarterly reports are to be submitted to the Board’s Strategic Committee.
This month, as part of our ongoing focus on the Vocational Training Centres and the people who lead them, The Stakeholder paid a visit to Penson Mootu (photo), Centre Manager of the Okakarara VTC in the Otjozondjupa region.

Who is Penson Mootu?

A humble man, first and foremost. In a nutshell, an accomplished VET manager, a qualified business and management leader, someone who quickly develops rapport with stakeholders, professional, a good communicator, dynamic and humorous. approach helps create a stimulating learning environment.

I started out as a trainee at Okakarara VTC in 1977 and completed my N3 qualification in 1980. From 1981 until 1984, I did my Civil Engineering Diploma plus a N4 course with the Orangemund Technical College. I hold an MBA degree which I did through ESAMI, plus a Management Development Diploma from Stellenbosch University. In addition to that, I also hold a diploma in VET Management from Italy.

What makes your job rewarding?

Year after year, to witness the empowerment of our trainees with skills and competencies that change their lives. It validates what we do. The majority of OVTC graduates are now self-employed. Their successes reflect the good work we are doing.

OVTC also has established strong relationships with our stakeholders, especially our industry partners, and the positive feedback they give on the quality of our graduates is a good indicator that we are doing a good job in terms of leading the institution in the right direction.

Tell us about your team?

I have a very strong and committed team. We share a common purpose, we strive towards common goals and we adopt a common approach. We are an open team, and every team member is readily available to share information and render support, when required to do so. I believe this visionary and dedicated team will lead the Okakarara VTC into the future and to greater heights.

What challenges came with your appointment at Okakarara VTC?

A new organisational structure introduced at Okakarara VTC and the population of that structure with new staff posed a bit of a challenge, but we were able to overcome it and today, all the new additions to our centre have settled in well and have bought into our organisational culture of productivity, dedication and teamwork.

New business processes introduced under the NTA's Strategic Plan and the OVTC Business Plan, including the introduction of performance appraisals and putting everything in place to ensure that we meet all the requirements to be granted official registration status by the NTA, also proved a bit challenging. But, we coped with all through teamwork and through embracing change.

What are your immediate plans for OVTC?

Farming and agriculture remain the mainstay of the Okakarara community and there have been calls for our centre to consider offering agriculture-related training courses such as veterinary technician, leather tannery and animal husbandry. These requests enjoy serious consideration and we hope that with the support of the NTA and our donor and development partners, that we will soon be able to meet these demands.

What are your views on our VET sector?

We need to improve the sector, as we have the potential to grow and become one of the most sought after fields of study/training. With the right support and proper co-operation between the VTCs and the industry at large, it is a target we can achieve together.

What is your message for our country's VET trainees and graduates?

The future of the Namibian nation is literally in their hands. They are the ones that will build this nation to become one that has world-class infrastructure and skilled individuals that will continuously strive for excellence.

VET is the future. Our Government appreciates this reality and through the NTA, anticipates for our sector to become a key driver in our quest to boost national economic development and growth. They should therefore ignore negative sentiments that still persist out there, and under which they are labeled as second-class employees. A vibrant and relevant VET sector has the potential to turn our country into an economic powerhouse and as skilled VET practitioners; they can play a key part in this exciting transformation.

How do you deal with the common misconception some people have about VET?

Many people still think of VET as a “last resort” field of study reserved for those who failed Grade 10 and 12. What they do not appreciate is that our VET system has turned many of our children who have failed at school into productive and successful entrepreneurs, many of whom today are owning their own businesses, and instead of becoming jobseekers like many of our university and technikon graduates, are employing others in their ventures.

My way of countering these sentiments is to tell the naysayers about our success stories. It always seems to work!

How would you describe cooperation with the NTA?

Excellent. I must admit that we all, including my peers at other VTCs, were a bit skeptical at first about this new entity and its agenda. But, I think that the NTA is indeed the right vehicle to re-engineer a new VET dispensation for our country and its people, under which all VET stakeholders work together in finding common solutions to challenges we face. I speak on behalf of all other VTC leadership teams when I say that we have indeed made significant strides under the NTA’s new strategic approach. As public training institutions, we trust the NTA. The organisation has our full support.
DEEP IN THOUGHT: SACC Chairperson, Cowley van der Merwe.

FUTURE AUTOMECHANICS: Automech trainees at the Namwater HRDC posing for a picture with their Centre Head, Richardt Kharuxab.

VET HISTORY: Trainees at the Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology, NIMT, restored this old 1907 steam locomotive.

PICTURE FOCUS

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE: Manager: VET Programmes, Amon Haufiku shared this picture of the newly constructed National Youth Service Training Centre.

VET ADVOCACY: Learners at the NTA stand at the recent Omaheke Regional Career Fair at Gobabis.

GIRL POWER: A group of female WVTC trainees during a Metalwork & Fabrication session.

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PR Manager, Mornay Louw at a recent meeting with Young Achievers Namibia.

VET EXPERTS: WorldSkills Experts, Gabriel Shikudule, Raphael Haingura and Phillipus van der Merwe joining Acting CEO, Jerry Beukes and Manager- VET Standards, Sens Shoolongo for a picture before leaving for South Korea.

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VET SKILLS: A Clothing Manufacturing trainee at OVTC measuring a graduation gown during a practical session.
National Consultations on VET Educators Draft Policy

The NTA’s Vocational Curriculum Implementation Division is to embark on a series of consultation visits across the country to source stakeholder input into its Draft National VET Educators Policy.

According to the Manager: Curriculum Implementation, Ernst Eixab (photo), the NTA has with the assistance of experts developed a Draft National VET Educators Policy, which will be used as a tool to promote the status and professionalism of VET educators working in institutional, workplace, and community and school settings all over Namibia.

“The NTA’s VET Curriculum Implementation Division has been mandated to carry out national consultative workshops to seek stakeholder input into this very important document before it is tabled at the next meeting of the Standards, Assessment and Certification Council, (SACC)”, Eixab noted.

He encourages interested stakeholders, especially those at institutional level to attend the consultation sessions where they will be expected to comment and provide input on the Draft National VET Educators Policy. “The NTA is an engagement-driven organisation and the meaningful input of our stakeholders will not only assist us in the validation of what is proposed in the draft policy, but also in its overall refinement”, Eixab explained.

“It is important that we submit a document to the SACC in which the aspirations and needs of our stakeholders are encapsulated. It is of utmost importance that when we reach the implementation stages that the policy speaks to the needs of all trainers in the VET system and that nobody feels left out. It has to be a comprehensive document that will guide us in our implementation of programmes to upgrade the qualifications of our VET trainers for the foreseeable future”, he added.

The first meeting is to take place at Swakopmund on Thursday, the 16th July 2015 at the Swakopmund Sands Hotel, while a second meeting is scheduled for Tsunab on Tuesday, 21st July 2015 at the Makalani Hotel.

The consultation team is also to visit the south with a meeting to take place at Keetmanshoop on Friday, 24th July 2015 at the town’s Central Lodge.

The Draft National VET Educators Policy can be downloaded from the ‘Downloads’ page on the NTA’s corporate website through the following link: http://www.nta.com.na/?page_id=1064

Interested parties are encouraged to study the draft policy and to confirm their attendance and participation before the respective consultation dates with Mr Simon Mubiana, +264 61 2078 519, or email: smubiana@nta.com.na

Meet Our Competitors for WorldSkills São Paulo, Brazil 2015

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