The NTA and Spain's Institute of Innovation & Applied Research for Vocational Education & Training (Tknika) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, on the 16th of March 2015, at NTA Village in the capital.

Tknika is a renowned European institute of innovation created by the Basque Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, under the direct support of Spain's Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and Lifelong Learning.

The agreement binds the two parties in the establishment of exchange programmes for Namibian VET trainers and trainees at various institutions in Spain, and in particular the Basque Country. The programmes are to include aspects of theory and technical upskilling training, with special emphasis on renewable energy. Other areas provided for under the agreement include leadership and management training for managers, principals and leaders of VET institutions in Namibia and technical support and training in the fields of Aquaponics, by way of partnerships between Tknika and Namibian institutions. It also includes technical support in the establishment of a network for Spanish and Namibian VET institutions.

NTA Acting CEO, Jerry Beukes said the agreement is aligned with Namibia’s high priority training as identified in the NDP4 and the training priorities identified by the NTA’s own Industry Skills Committees.

On his part Dr Iñaki Mujika - Executive Director of Tknika highlighted the importance of giving effect to the agreement and to ensure that it contributes to the further strengthening and development of the VET sector in both countries.

Namibian trainers and trainees will be hosted at the International Basque Campus (VETIBAC), which offers opportunities for training in different areas using up-to-date equipment, trained professionals and advanced theoretical approaches. Training courses are offered in Spanish, English and French, in some specific areas.
Employers still have until the 1st of May 2015 to submit claims under the Employer Training Grant Funding Window of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Levy.

The Manager: Training Advisory Services, Mighty Katulo, told The Stakeholder that the National Training Fund Department - making use of its database of VET Levy-registered employers - has issued several communications to create awareness about the need for employers to submit claims before the due date. “We are confident that we have reached our employers and that they are indeed aware of the requirement to submit their claims before the deadline”, Katulo stated.

Katulo is also satisfied with the participation of employers in a series of countrywide sensitisation meetings where they were introduced to the claims process. “The response has been overwhelming and we are encouraged by the eagerness shown by employers to participate in the online claims process”, he added.

Under the Employer Training Grant Funding Window, registered employers can claim back, on production of valid evidence, up to 50 percent of the levies they have paid for actual costs of training conducted.

Employers who do not submit claims risk forfeiting grants, unless otherwise agreed by the NTA. All unclaimed grants are to be transferred to the Key Priority Grant Funding Window towards priority training interventions, as approved by the NTA Board of Directors. Employers are to complete and submit claims online through the NTA’s corporate website, www.nta.com.na

Manager: Training Advisory Services, Mighty Katulo

Greetings!

The NTA continues to make huge strides towards establishing itself as a national port of call for vocational skills, under our rolling five-year Strategic Plan.

Rolling plans allow for revisions and adjustments as a continuous exercise under which the effect of changed circumstances and conditions can be incorporated.

As such, our Strategic Plan will continue to define those key activities that are fundamental in responding to the changing needs of our stakeholders. Initiatives and action plans that support them will draw upon every area of our work and will be developed in collaboration with staff and stakeholders alike.

The Strategic Plan is now due for what will be its third annual review, later this month. Rest assured of our unwavering commitment in ensuring its relevance and currency towards establishing a Vocational Education and Training system that provides for the needs of both individuals and communities into the future.

Yours in Vocational Education and Training,

Jerry Beukes

STAFF STAKE-OUT

SH: Who is Christophine Hiho away from the office?
A very quiet and reserved lady. A wife to my husband and a mother to my children. My family is very important to me and everything I do is aimed at keeping them happy. I am a God-fearing woman who is always respectful to others.

SH: Tell us about your job at the Namibia Training Authority.
My job manning the NTA frontdesk is indeed a very important job, which requires me to always be courteous, patient, trustworthy, reliable and accommodating. I am often the first point of contact for many of our wide array of stakeholders and the quality of my interaction determines how they will perceive our organisation.

SH: What is your opinion of the NTA family?
Although we always seem to work under immense pressure in a very deadline-driven environment, we remain a strong and vibrant team. The fact that we respect and value each other instills a strong team spirit and a sense of belonging.

SH: What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning?
I pray. For my children, husband, extended family, colleagues, friends, the poor and destitute, my employer, our leaders. Yes, my faith is very important to me. It is what keeps my going.

SH: Tell us about your future plans. Where do you see yourself in five years time?
I want to make use of opportunities offered under the NTA’s Staff Development Policy and enroll for further studies in the Office Administration/Secretarial field. I want to grow and I believe that gaining experience and upgrading my qualifications will definitely open doors for me!
The Namibia Training Authority is now officially a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s International Technical and Vocational Education Centre (UNESCO-UNEVOC) network.

The centre acts as part of the United Nations mandate to promote peace, justice, equity, poverty alleviation, and greater social cohesion. It assists member states to develop policies and practices concerning education for the world of work and skills development for employability and citizenship. It is also aimed at achieving access for all, high quality, relevant and effective programmes and learning opportunities throughout life.

UNESCO-UNEVOC undertakes its activities through a worldwide network of centers in more than 165 countries. It is considered the only network of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions with a global outreach and links and fosters interaction and learning among diverse TVET institutions and stakeholders. Its headquarters is located in Bonn, Germany.

According to the NTA’s Manager: VET Programmes, Amon Haufiku, the organisation’s alignment with the activities of UNESCO-UNEVOC is aimed at garnering experiences and sharing technical and developmental expertise with fellow members on how to further develop the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) model. “Our membership would be of great benefit to the local VET curriculum, which will be developed and strengthened through knowledge sharing, collaboration and joined activities. Our VET curriculum will be integrated into a unique platform for South-South and North-South cooperation as a key delivery modality for advancing TVET”, he highlighted. “We hope that this can have a trickledown effect so as to reach teaching institutions at secondary or post-secondary school level and empower them on the true potential of VET” he added.

UNESCO-UNEVOC also facilitates knowledge sharing through the publishing of TVET related research and its various online communities, including the e-forum, the UNEVOC Network Portal and TVETipedia.

As an official member, the NTA now has access to UNEVOC research reports and its various online communities and platforms.

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SEND US YOUR PICTURES AND HAVE THEM PUBLISHED IN OUR E-NEWSLETTER!
info@nta.com.na

INTERNATIONAL VET:
Acting CEO, Jerry Beukes and Managers, Ian Gicheru, Ernst Mbangula and Mornay Louw outside the China International Convention Centre in Beijing.

VET IN PRACTICE:
A VTC trainee practicing his metal fabrication skills in a local workshop.

LEAD TALK:
Namibia Manufacturers Association CEO, Ronnie Varkevisser and colleague during a VET Levy meeting.

SAYING GOODBYE TO A VETERAN:
VET Programmes Manager, Amon Haufiku handing over a cake to Ephraim Shinana at a farewell function for the latter.

A VET SALUTE:
Francois Strauss, Moses Tjirene and Zack Haakuria giving a final salute to former Acting CEO, Ester Anna Nghipondoka at her farewell function.

A PARTING GIFT:
Board Chair, Otto Nakasole Shikongo handing over a framed staff picture to former Acting CEO, Ester Anna Nghipondoka at her farewell function at NTA Village Hall.

VET WELLNESS:
HR GM, Bernadette Sam found time in her busy schedule to pose for a picture with proud members of the NTA Wellness Committee.

LEAD CALL:
Call Centre Operator, Edla Kamehozu advising a levy-paying employer on the Employer Training Grant claims process.

GIRL POWER:
Electrical trainees at the NamWater HRDC outside Okahandja, during a break.

VTC COUNTERPARTS:
VTC Managers Titus Malangu, Richard Kambinda, Penson Mootu, Erriki Tjandja and Felix Mukasa found time for a group photo.

VET @ NIMT:
A Trainee at the NIMT Arandis Campus preparing for a practical session.
The former State-owned Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) under the NTA’s supervision, have over recent years made considerable progress towards becoming efficient and target-driven institutions, offering high quality training services.

The Stakeholder, as part of a special focus on the leaders behind these institutions and the invaluable role they have played, and continue to play, in the transformation of their centres, caught up with the Centre Manager of the Rundu VTC in the Kavango East region, Erkki Tjandja.

**SH: Who is Erkki Tjandja?**

A dynamic and humble man, born in a village called Kayira-Yira, about 17 kilometers west of Rundu, about 43 years ago. I went to school at Nakaza Village Primary and completed my Technical Matric at the Rundu Technical Institute in 1990. I was soon thereafter selected to undergo an aptitude test with the Ministry of Labour and became an apprentice with Namtrac Training Centre in 1991. During my apprenticeship, I enrolled with the Academy for Out-of-School Training (now the Polytechnic of Namibia) and completed my National Technical Certificates, N4 and N5, in Mechanical Engineering. After undergoing trade tests in 1993, I was deemed competent and was awarded a Trade Diploma in Construction Plant Mechanics.


I started at RVTC in January 1997 as an Instructor for Mathematics, Science, Drawing and Trade Theory. I later became the Senior Instructor for Auto Mechanics and was promoted to Head of Liaison. I started acting as Centre Manager in 2005, until I was permanently appointed in June 2006.

Other qualifications and training programmes include a Pedagogical Training and Instructors Programme, National Higher Education Diploma, Bachelor of Education (Hons) degree and Management Development Programme certificate. I am currently studying towards a Master's degree in Business Administration.

**SH: What challenges came with your appointment as Centre Head at RVTC?**

There were several challenges: Winning the trust of staff and stakeholders; establishing a new management team; uniting disgruntled staff and persuading them to take ownership of the centre.

Staff also resisted the change that came about with the establishment of the NTA and the proposed changes to the curriculum and training model. Managing the transformation proved difficult and we had to deal with a few strikes and demonstrations. Some key staff members also left for greener pastures amidst the uncertainty.

However, through focusing on our core business of training and by gradually winning the naysayers over, we have developed into a strong and formidable unit. Today, the RVTC team is a driven and dedicated group that operates in a working culture where the delivery of quality training, guides us in all of our operations.

**SH: As a leader in training delivery, what do you deem as the biggest challenge for our country's VET sector?**

I will have to say the misconceptions and attitudes around VET qualifications and their ranking on the Namibia Qualifications Framework.

We are making good inroads in countering these stereotypes. However, we require stronger political will to accept VET as a viable career option, instead of an alternative, to drive the attainment of the goals and objectives of Vision 2030. There is still a strong need to inform, educate and mobilise the masses to fully understand the VET system in its entirety.

The day industry and societal stakeholders alike consider and value our graduates and the quality of their workmanship, they can also be direct beneficiaries of public works tenders, instead of being exploited as mere labourers in projects, as is the case currently.

**SH: What makes your job rewarding?**

Tracking the progress of your graduates and learning about their successes in empowering themselves, their families and their communities. Seeing our graduates coming back to their alma mater to share their successes and motivating the current crop of trainees to take their training seriously. Visiting mines, factories and plants to meet our graduates and witnessing how they excel as employees, entrepreneurs, joint ventures, and cooperatives.

**SH: If there is anything you could change about the VET system, what would that be?**

I believe we need to make entrepreneurship training compulsory for all our trainees. This is very important so as to change the mindset of training jobseekers instead of job creators.

**SH: What are your views on the future of our country's VET sector?**

I am really overwhelmed by the current environment of mutual cooperation and support between the Government, NTA, training institutions and our industry partners to boost and grow the VET sector in its entirety. It is really encouraging to experience the shared focus on preparing competent trainees with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that add value to our national efforts to reduce poverty and create employment.

We are on track! However, there is still room for improvement, specifically in the area of employment creation and addressing those skills gaps that have been identified during the implementation of our current and previous national development plans. If as training institutions, whether private or public, we can always be responsive to our country’s skills and training needs, I have hope that we can indeed play a big part on the realisation of the macro-economic development objectives as encapsulated in Vision 2030.
ANOTHER BATCH OF OD-ETD GRADUATES FOR THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

A further 41 candidates from an initial intake of 50 individuals from employers within the broader agriculture sector, are to receive Level 5 certificates in Occupationally Directed Education Training and Development (OD-ETD) Practices, at a ceremony planned for the 24th of April 2015, at the NTA headquarters, in Windhoek.

According to ProVET Programme Team Leader, Marijke Overeem, the course covered key areas of the vocational training and assessment process such as assessment planning, delivery and moderation. “All of these aspects are indeed reflected in our Namibian unit standards”, she noted. Overeem also looks forward to the graduates applying their newly gained skills and knowledge in providing CBET training to others. “Investing in capacity building programmes of this nature remains of utmost importance as we continue to re-engineer our current training arrangements. Moreover, since the course is competency-based, the graduates should now be able to deliver quality competency-based training in their respective occupational areas”, she explained.

The course was facilitated by a South African firm, VeryCoolIdeas, a skills development and related training programme service provider, which specializes in the creation and delivery of training programmes in the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) field.

The Promotion of Vocational Education and Training Project (ProVET) is a joint initiative between the NTA and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and focuses on the area of improvement of quality of the CBET system. The building of capacities within the CBET system is a key project priority, with a special emphasis on the development of trainers, assessors and moderators.

The candidates come from a wide range of employers in the agricultural sector.

A first batch of 18 agricultural trainers successfully completed the Level 5 course in Occupationally Directed Education, Training and Development Practices and received certificates at a ceremony held in the capital, on the 31st of October 2014.

Both the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) accredit the course.

STAFF WELLNESS – A KEY HUMAN RESOURCES PRIORITY

The Namibia Training Authority’s Human Resources Department is making good progress towards establishing the organisation as an employer of choice.

It has recently introduced a Staff Wellness Committee, which in partnership with the NHP Medical Aid Scheme, took the lead in the organisation of a Staff Wellness Day at NTA Village on the 24th of March 2015.

The day was open to both members and non-members of the scheme and amongst others allowed employees to test their blood pressure and cholesterol levels. They also had access to dieticians and fitness instructors who assisted in working out individual diets and fitness plans, whereas a special desk tested the blood types of employees.

Human Resources General Manager, Bernadette Sam, told The Stakeholder that she was overwhelmed by the response. “Wellness programmes demonstrate to employees that their health is important and that their employer knows and cares about this aspect”, she noted. Sam also highlighted that with healthcare costs and chronic disease rates continually rising each year, it is becoming increasingly difficult for both employees and employers to afford medical costs. “We will therefore continue to prioritise the establishment of a conducive and enabling environment under which our employees can be made aware of the importance of adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyles, which is why successful employee wellness programmes are becoming increasingly important in the workplace”, she stressed.

Sam also explained why it was beneficial for the NTA to invest in a corporate wellness programme. “Wellness programmes are well worth the time and effort invested in them. The success record of companies utilising these programmes indicates that an employee who is happy and healthy is more productive and motivated, stays away from work due to illness less often, and remains employed with the company for a longer time”, she noted.

Sam also congratulated the Staff Wellness Committee for a job well done. “The event has been an outstanding success and has inspired many of our employees to explore healthy lifestyles. We now look forward to rolling out similar activities at the Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) under the NTA’s supervision to allow staff there to also benefit”, she noted.

More than 80 of the about 120 Head Office employees participated in the event. Other entities who took part include the Blood Clinic, Nucleus Fitness and the Cancer Association.