

Rössing Uranium employees are mentoring the girl-child

Four of our employees took up the challenge as mentors, to coach scholars as part of a unique learning and development partnership. This mentorship initiative is part of the Rössing Foundation's learner support programme in the Erongo region of Namibia.

The initiative is hosted by CNNE Rössing Uranium with employees volunteering to share information about their own career path, provide guidance, motivation, emotional support and setting goals. The mentors are linked to the Rössing Women-in-Mining (WiM) group.

Currently the Rössing mentors are connected to four mentees, who are the first beneficiaries of this grand initiative.

Rössing's Environmental advisor, Loide Hausiku, as the mentor who is advising, training, or counselling a mentee, said the programme started towards the end of 2019 after the



mentees wrote their final exams.

"Discussions were held to know each other, set up an understanding of what the mentorship programme is about and what is expected from both sides. There were also discussions about career choices, universities, accommodations and bursaries."

"There has been a great emphasis on life in general, giving nuggets of wisdom from experiences we had at universities, especially on what to avoid and what to focus on. Our mentees' studies have been hampered by Covid-19 and in an effort to better support them this has been a topic, moving into e-learning and getting accustomed to the new way of doing things," she explained.

Loide hopes to empower a girl-child to dream big and have the confidence to achieve what she has set her mind on. "I hope to make an impact in our community through this initiative, which I hope these girls will grow to give back to communities by inspiring and replicating what was once given to them by a stranger who cheered them on until they made it."

Although the ball started rolling only just before Covid-19 struck, Loide notes that the mentees are excited because having a mentor means that one can bounce ideas off their mentor, and also be assisted in streamlining these ideas whilst working towards a singular goal, maybe an upcoming test, or multiple visions to set a career path with academic victories along the way.

Loide's mentee is a first year student at the University of Namibia's Oshakati campus, studying towards a Bachelor of Science in Public Health.

"I am mentoring her on academics, how to navigate and cope with life at university and how to work to graduate within the study period."



Selma Lukas

Environmental advisor, Loide Hausiku

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Environmental advisor, Ann-August Shikongo

Also from the Environmental section is Ann-August Shikongo, a mentor to a level 1 Millwright student at the Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology's (NIMT), Tsumeb campus.

Ann-August has described the mentoring process as interesting and an enjoyable journey so far. "I met my mentee, Emily Makina, in November 2019 at the Rössing Foundation's Arandis centre."

She has a passion for science and wanted to pursue a career in biochemistry as her first choice and a second choice being tourism. In January when the results were released, I contacted Emily to update me on her performance - she achieved 26 points in six subjects and 23 points in one subject. By looking at her results, we had an in-depth discussion on the way forward as her points would not secure her a place at UNAM and the viable option left was to enrol

for a tourism course with the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

"However, she told me that she is an introvert and tourism will not compliment her personality and interests - she would rather like to pursue a career as an electrician. This exchange between mentee and mentor then led Emily to decide to enrol with NIMT at the Tsumeb campus.

"I looked at the positive side of her studies and encouraged her to follow her heart and that the electrical field is not limited as one can study further and even become an electrical engineer. During the registration process, she could unfortunately not secure a place in the electrical study field. The team rethought their options and enrolled as an apprentice in NIMT's millwright study field."

"Most of the students do not get an opportunity to speak to career guidance counsellors when they are in grade 12, and they end up enrolling for courses that they are not familiar with. At times this is one of the reasons students are dropping out of institutions or ending up changing courses due to lack of interest in their first-choice study fields," she said, adding that this can become frustrating to both the students and parents. Students even forfeit their bursaries due to poor performance which can be traced back to inadequate or a lack of career guidance.

"I call her once a month to discuss her progress and challenges she was facing while at school and now that she is under Covid-19 restrictions, I keep motivating her to continue with self-study where possible. In

general, we discuss her concerns about Covid-19, and some of the topics we have touched on are on self-discipline, the importance of punctuality, working hard, to always remember her upbringing, not to surrender to peer pressure but rather to focus on her studies."



Emily Makina

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Accountant, Eunice van Rooyen.

date with schoolwork and to perform well during this unpredicted time.

“However my mentee is positive and driven to work through the mentoring activities and has obtained assistance that will be of benefit now and in future.”

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has brought unexpected challenges - Leilanie Feris, Superintendent: Comminution, was assigned a mentee, but has been unable to maintain contact after the first get-to-know meeting held at the Rössing Foundation’s centre in Swakopmund, however her outreach to make contact continues, and so will the vision for Rössing’s mentorship programme continues to reach out to benefit the girl-child.

Eunice van Rooyen, an Accountant at Rössing Uranium, also shared her journey with her mentee. “Our journey didn’t start as smooth as we wanted, with a few hurdles along the way, some of which included the impact of Covid-19 and the restrictions it has brought to our envisaged face-to-face communication.

“We have however persevered and managed to get on a pleasing path to make these sessions successful,” she said.

Eunice aims to foster a good relationship with her mentee so that the communication is open to discuss any challenges and to offer guidance and direction on matters that she has been through, observed or have been mentored on, that have been proven successful.

She noted that there is currently a lot of pressure on students to get up to



Natango Amadhila