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LIVE YOUR PASSION

01

Parastus Nepolo

AirConditioning and Refrigeration Technician

What started off as fixing domestic electrical and refrigeration appliances while in his first year at the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (WVTC) has catapulted Parastus Nepolo's business into a fully-fledged entity that now renders services to individuals, private sector and the Government.

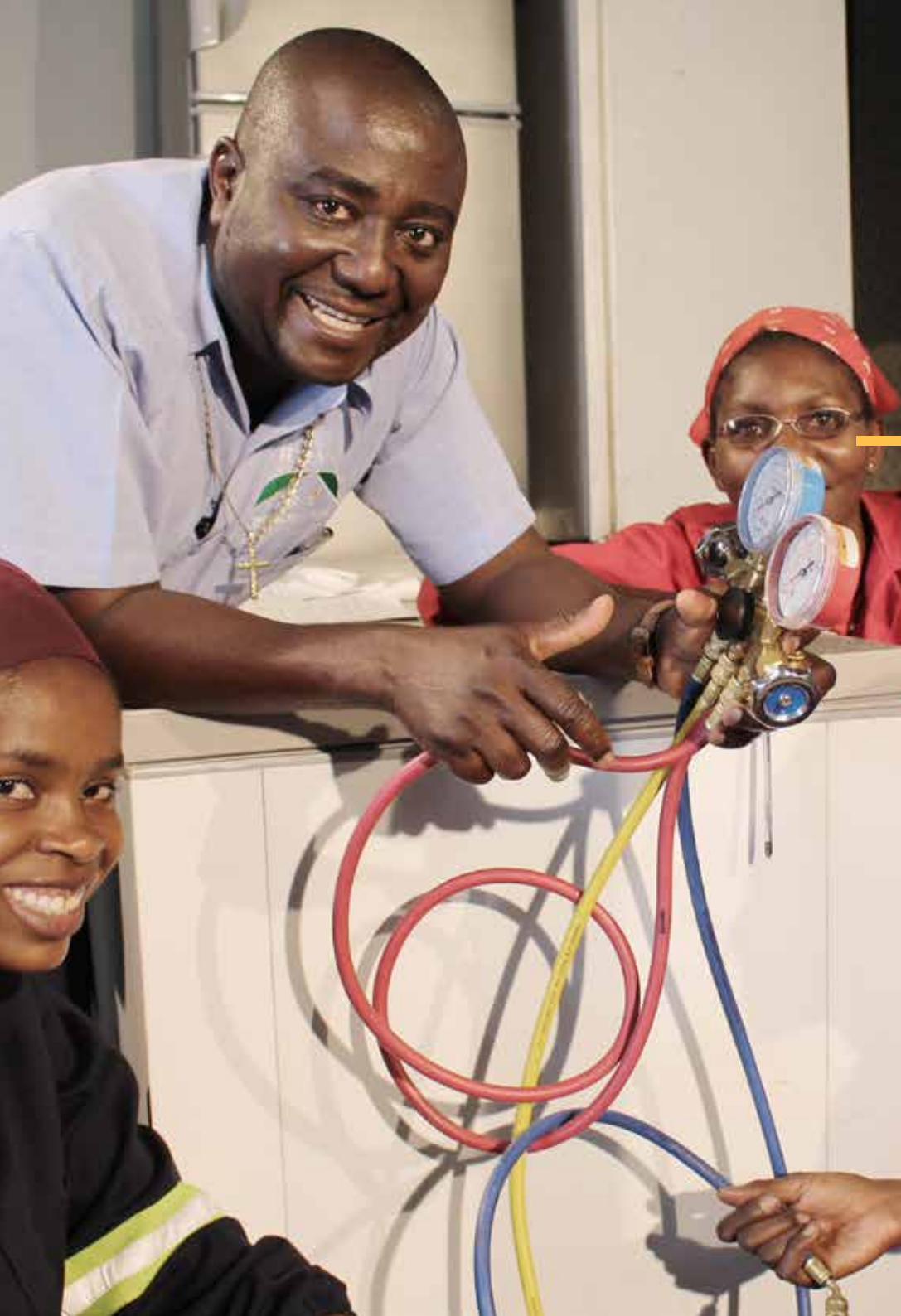
The 40-year old Nepolo, known among his peers as Mdu, originally hails from Okathima KaNangolo in Omusati. He is the owner of a prospering and successful business; Millennium Refrigeration & Electrical.

Born Entrepreneur

Soon after graduating as a qualified Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technician, and driven by the desire to be his own boss, Nepolo

trusted that inner voice and went with his gut in registering his company, Millennium Refrigeration & Electrical. "I had this dream to become an independent contractor, even before I enrolled at Windhoek VTC. I never wanted to go look for employment. I wanted to start my own business and be my own boss," he remarks.

It was during his time at Windhoek VTC that Nepolo started to put the building blocks in place for what was to become Millenium Refrigeration & Electrical, a company which today employs about 120 permanent and 40 casual employees at its eleven branches in Windhoek, Ongwediva, Keetmanshoop, Rundu, Mariental, Opuwo, Eenhana, Swakopmund, Grootfontein, Otjiwarongo and Katima Mulilo. "While in my first year, I started walking from door to door





and fixed the domestic electrical appliances of home owners. In my second year, I started purchasing broken appliances from students, which I fixed and resold to new university students and at the Katutura State Hospital Nurses Home”, he relates.

Balancing classes with his booming business was not easy. Nepolo and a classmate, Chris Simon, who today is the company’s Technical Manager, would often have to walk to the Old Compound in Katutura, where they opened a stall. “Ours was very much an afternoon business. Customers would drop their appliances at the stall next door and we would collect them and work late into the evening fixing them, whereafter we would have to return to the Windhoek VTC hostel by foot. Times were tough, but we persevered. Success never comes on a silver platter. With determination and

resolve, you can turn hardship into triumph”, he notes.

A Busy World

Airconditioning and refrigeration technicians install, maintain and repair heating, cooling and refrigeration systems and equipment. They may install ducted airconditioning in a family home, or build large walk-in refrigeration units for businesses needing mass food storage. They bolt and build units into buildings with brackets, piping, gas and water lines, cabling and wires. Following pre-set specifications, they use motors, pumps, filters, switches and gauges to put together the heating or cooling system that is required for the job.

Millennium Refrigeration & Electrical specialises in the

installation of domestic and industrial airconditioning and refrigeration systems, cold-freezer rooms and electric and solar networks. “Airconditioners are becoming commonplace, especially considering the Namibian climate with its harsh summers and cold and dry winters. Having a proper airconditioning system in place helps reduce heat and humidity, thus reducing the impact on our ability to perform and complete work tasks”, Nepolo says. “The work environment might seem physically demanding, but I have employed many graduates, including female graduates, who take care of installations and service maintenance for our customers, which include service shops, hotels, factories and cold storage plants.

It’s all about talent, skills, hard work and passion”, Nepolo says.

Growing Business

Nepolo is certainly not resting on his laurels and has now ventured into construction, real estate, property development, tourism and the services sectors. “I am always on the lookout for new opportunities, and as such, I have entered into a number of business partnerships, which include a lodge, bakeries and three residential complex construction projects. Millennium Refrigeration & Electrical also has its own warehouse from which we sell refrigeration, airconditioning and electrical spares and components”, he explains.

His business acumen is also recognised by industry peers who have elected him into the structures of the Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI). “They know me as a strong advocate for local economic

Passion for VET

Nepolo remains a firm believer in the potential of Vocational Education and Training in empowering technically inclined youth with the skills so desperately needed to build and strengthen the Namibian economy. “Without technical and vocational skills, we would not have buildings, electricity, and infrastructure. It doesn’t matter how you look at it. If you don’t have these skills, you don’t have an economy. We don’t have to look far for evidence. Look at Germany, Finland, South Korea. Strong economies built on technical and vocational skills”, he said.

He also serves on the Namibia Training Authority’s Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technical Working Group, responsible for the development of industry-relevant training curricula in this area. “I believe that improving quality in our discipline should be a shared responsibility. As industry roleplayers, we need to remain involved in the further development of our discipline and to support its further growth. My company therefore takes in Airconditioning and Refrigeration trainees from across the country as interns, because we believe that we need to play a role in their empowerment and in preparing them for the world of work. Its all about partnership”, Nepolo explains. He also maintains strong ties with his alma mater, the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre, where he was the

motivational speaker at the 2015 graduation ceremony.

Perception

Asked about how to deal with the unfair societal perception under which technical and vocational occupations are labelled as inferior options with limited prospects for career growth, Nepolo encouraged parents to reject the notion that technical and vocational training courses are not worth pursuing.

Vitality

Nepolo believes in planning and routine. He wakes up at 04:45 and exercise in his home gym for an hour. He has daily on-site planning meetings at 07:30 where they discuss key daily assignments and progress. Each meeting ends with a prayer, whereafter his teams leave for their work sites.

Ascribing his growth as an entrepreneur to the support he enjoys from his wife and family, Nepolo believes in ploughing back. As the patron of the Onampila Combined School in Oshana, he is a staunch supporter of the school’s excellence programme and sponsors cash prizes to the top academic performers, annually. His former primary school, Emvula Combined School named their sports field after him, after he invested in sports equipment and in upgrading work. Today, Parastus Nepolo is not only an Airconditioning and

Refrigeration Technician, he is also an entrepreneur, a teacher, a technical expert, a business leader and a philanthropist. His story and passion for what he does teach us that success is not the key to happiness. That, on the contrary, happiness is the key to success. That, if you love what you are doing, success is sure to follow.

Sometimes it is difficult to accept my new role to manage a growing enterprise as its Managing Director, and that instead of picking up a screwdriver or wrench, I have to deal with contracts and meetings to grow and sustain the business. But, I still get my hands dirty from time to time. This is just who I am. Once a technician, always a technician.

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**What does it take
to become an
AirConditioning
and Refrigeration
Technician?**



Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technicians install, service and maintain refrigeration and airconditioning systems.

They advise clients on different refrigeration and airconditioning systems. They assemble and install pipe work for refrigeration and airconditioning systems and install or oversee the installation of such systems. Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technicians also check existing refrigeration and airconditioning systems for leaks and faults and do repair and maintenance work when required.

Skills and Knowledge

Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technicians need to have knowledge of mechanical, electrical and electronic systems, gas systems and atmospheric pressure and temperature systems.

Basic knowledge of physics and chemistry, a thorough understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of various refrigeration and airconditioning systems and skill in interpreting building plans and other working drawings are also key requirements.

Training

To qualify as an Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technician, you can enroll at registered training

institutions for a three-year training course, which includes compulsory industry apprenticeship, that will prepare you for a career as a technician capable of designing, installing and servicing many different types of airconditioning and refrigeration systems.

As you progress through the training programme, you will become familiar with the design, installation and service techniques of heating and air conditioning systems in residential and small commercial buildings. As well, you will learn to size, select and maintain equipment for building comfort according to various industry standards.

Working Conditions

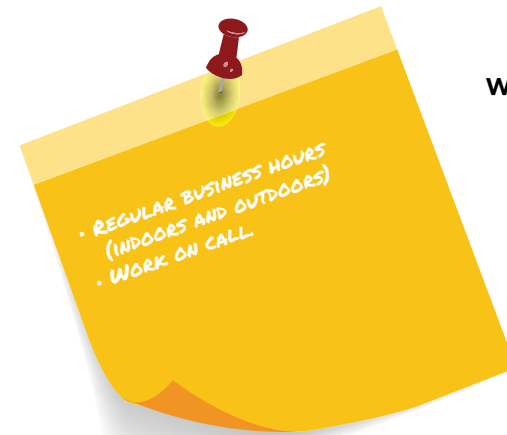
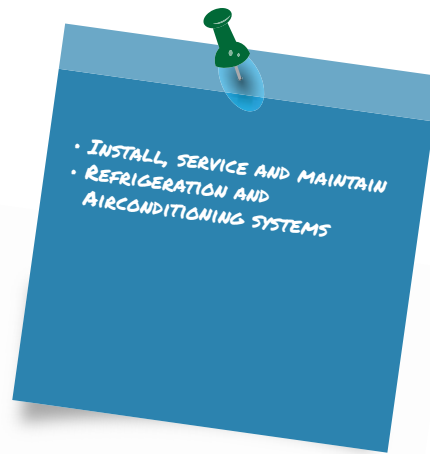
Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technicians usually work regular business hours, but may work longer hours, evenings and weekends to get jobs done, or work on call. They work indoors and outdoors, on construction sites, container ships, in commercial buildings and private homes, and vehicles. They work in conditions that can be dusty, dirty, hot or cold. They may also work at heights on ladders and scaffolding or in confined spaces such as ceiling cavities.

Job Prospects

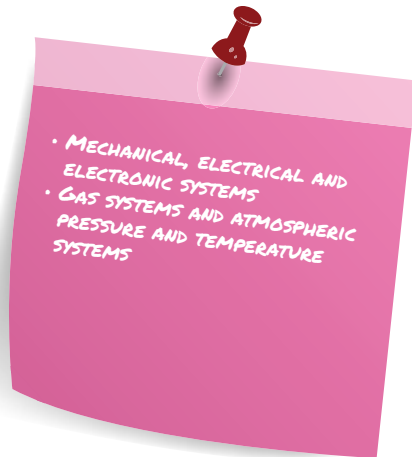
Chances of getting a job as an Airconditioning and Refrigeration

Technicians are good due to the increasing demand for airconditioning and refrigeration systems. Remuneration varies depending on experience and level of responsibility. Technicians may earn more if they work overtime, are on call, or are self-employed.

You too can live your passion and become an Airconditioning and Refrigeration Technician. If you are in excellent physical condition, have an aptitude for mechanical and mathematical work and have good spatial and form perception, manual dexterity, good eyesight and well-developed hand-eye coordination, you are a good candidate.



On the contrary, people with technical and vocational skills are much better positioned to create employment for themselves and others. Compare an airconditioning technician graduate with a social work graduate. The technician does not need to land a job to start generating an income. Germany and others grew their economies with highly skilled technical and vocational entrepreneurs. Technical and vocational skills create employment. It prepares young people to become job creators, instead of job seekers.



LIVE YOUR PASSION

02

Kathy Namundjebo

Joiner/Carpenter

Meet Katrina Namundjebo, a qualified Joiner and Carpenter, and owner of Windhoek-based Kathy's Joinery and Renovations. Hailing from Swakopmund in Erongo, this oldest of six siblings and graduate of the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre has defied the odds in an otherwise male dominated world. She is proof that women can excel in technical trades and that common perception that technical trades are for men only, is just that – perception. And not fact. This is her story.

Technically Inclined

Katrina Namundjebo, or Kathy as she is affectionately known, has always been more technically, than academically inclined. Growing up in Swakopmund, Namundjebo admired the German architecture and the integration of

wooden features and flooring into designs. “I never really excelled at theoretical schoolwork, probably because I wasn't really interested in it, but because I've always had the ability to design and make things with my hands. Its in my DNA, I am better at taking something apart and fixing it, as opposed to reading about fixing it”, she explains.

It wasn't easy convincing those close to her that she wanted to enroll to qualify as a Joiner and Cabinetmaker. “They thought it strange. It's no place for a woman. But, I've always been headstrong and they had no other option but to make peace with my decision. Their minds were put at ease when I got an opportunity to go to Germany and learn more about Joinery and Cabinetmaking”, she notes.



Today, Kathy's Joinery and Renovations is a growing enterprise, specialising in a range of products and services, including designing and manufacturing household and office furniture such as kitchen units, cupboards, counters, cabinets, beds and baby cots. Although its Joinery and Cabinetmaking work remains the company's core business, Namundjebo is steadily venturing into the broader construction market through general renovation work, including plumbing, welding, tiling, painting and airconditioner installation work.

Difficult Beginnings

It has not always been smooth sailing for this determined woman. "Yes, it took me five years to complete the standard three-year training course to qualify as a Joiner and Cabinetmaker. I

was paying for my own studies and dropped out three times, because I simply didn't have the money to pay for my training. But, I never stopped dreaming and I guess, that is what kept me going and encouraged me to complete my training", the single-minded Namundjebo recalls.

Upon graduation, Namundjebo found employment and worked on a number of projects for German and Chinese construction companies. "It was tough being the only lady in a group of male carpenters. Life was so tough that at one point, my Chinese foreman had to take me in to stay at his house, because I didn't have accommodation", she narrates.

Her big break came when she learned from a radio presenter that the Ministry of Trade was having an open day for small and medium entrepreneurs at a local hotel. "I

already had a rough business plan and brochures of the machines I needed for my own workshop. Still dressed in our overalls, my friend and I rushed there and I was able to engage the then Minister, Dr. Hage Geingob, who is today the Head of State and showed him pictures of work and installations I had done and told him about my needs", she says. "The Minister found it hard to believe that there were qualified women carpenters around. However, he referred me to officials in the Ministry who considered my proposal and made a commitment to fund the acquisition of workshop tools and machinery", she reminisces.

Namundjebo then made work of finding a suitable place from which she could run her business and found a vacant workshop at the Katutura Industrial Stalls near the Old Compound.

Today, her reputation as a female entrepreneur and a trailblazer in leveraging technical career options amongst young women, precedes her. Namundjebo received the 'Best New Entrepreneur' Award at the 2011 Made in Namibia Exposition and has participated at various trade fairs across Southern Africa. She was also inducted in the Namibian Business Hall of Fame as a Laureate in 2014, and is a regular motivational speaker at the National Youth Service's Career Guidance and Orientation Programme for new intakes.

On the wall of her Katutura workshop is a picture with former Zambian president, Rupiah Banda, when she won an award at the Lusaka Agricultural Show. "President Banda was very impressed. He called up local TV crews to film our stand so that it could encourage other women to start thinking differently about

technical careers”, she notes. “In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, it is quite common to find women joiners and carpenters. However, in Angola, it was not the case at all. The locals brought their children to our stand and all they wanted to know was where I studied, so that they could also send their daughters to enroll there”, Namundjebo narrates.

Booming Business

Today, Kathy’s Joinery and Renovations is growing from strength to strength.

Key clients include the Ministry of Defense, the National Housing Enterprise and the University of Namibia. “As an entrepreneur, your biggest business asset is your reputation. If your work and service offering is not of quality, you will not succeed, period. Excellence is what brings in and keeps clients. Yes, business is good, but my work is to ensure that each and every project in which Kathy’s Joinery & Renovations is involved in, is successful and that my clients are happy”, Namundjebo explains.

Although Namundjebo is making her mark locally, she also harbours dreams of opening her own training institution. “I want to do my part to grow the local skills base and make training accessible for those that are disabled and illiterate. You can’t talk about access without

opportunity”, she states

She also plans to set up shop in Angola. “Despite the economic downturn in that country, Angola’s construction sector offers a lot of potential and presents many opportunities for carpenters and joiners. “Tools and machinery are very expensive, but it is a dream that I am actively pursuing” she states.

Planning for Success

As a mother of a six-year-old daughter, Namundjebo admits that it sometimes becomes challenging to juggle motherhood with the demands of an entrepreneurial life. “I love my daughter with all my heart and I need to make sure that she gets all the love and attention she deserves. It’s not easy with such a demanding job and the constant pressure to grow and sustain my business. It’s a tight balancing act, but good planning helps to strike that balance”, she adds.

Kathy’s Joinery & Renovations

Namundjebo also takes in trainees from technical and vocational institutions for job attachments. “Factoring in and integrating the practical training expectations of trainees on job attachment into our day-to-day operations is very important. These trainees are not

there to sweep floors, but to learn and to be exposed to industry practice”, Namundjebo says. She also laments the fact that too many local employers pay mere lip service to attachment. “Attachment is a critical component of the training curriculum. Only through meaningful attachment opportunities will we be able to grow the industry and support training institutions in delivering the skilled and competent artisans so desperately needed for our economic growth and prosperity”, she concludes.

She continues to defy the odds. Her story teaches us that success is to be measured, not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which one has to overcome in that journey. Her inspiring and infectious passion for her work has driven her to overcome all the barriers in her way. She is living proof that our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.

She is living her passion.

As an entrepreneur, your biggest business asset is your reputation. If your work and service offering is not of quality, you will not succeed, period. Excellence is what brings in and keeps clients.

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**What does it
take to become a
Joiner/Carpenter?**



Joiners and Cabinetmakers use timber and board products to make fittings such as cabinets, doors, window frames, stairs and furniture.

They discuss clients' requirements, provide quotes, draw diagrams and plans, and measure, cut, assemble, sand and finish materials, usually timber and plywood, to make items. They fit the finished products in clients' homes or businesses.

Skills and Knowledge

Joiners And Cabinetmakers have strong woodworking and machinery skills. They have knowledge of how different material respond to being cut, glued, filed and sanded, and are able to read plans and technical drawings. Their work environment requires them to have knowledge of health and safety procedures and first aid. They are skilled in caring for and maintaining joinery equipment.

They also possess good computer skills to calculate specifications and costs, or create designs.

Training

To qualify as a Joiner and Cabinetmaker, you can enroll at registered training institutions for a three-year training course, which

includes compulsory industry apprenticeship, that will prepare you for a career in Joinery and Cabinetmaking, where you are capable of working with raw material and seeing a piece of wood come together as a finished product.

As you progress through the training programme, you will become familiar with the draughting of carpentry work, and the interpretation of technical plans. You will also learn to build comfort according to client specifications, and maintain equipment and tools. Three-year training course, which includes compulsory industry apprenticeship

Working Conditions

Joiners and Cabinetmakers usually work regular hours, but may have to work longer hours to meet deadlines. They may work in small joinery workshops or large furniture and fittings factories, where conditions can be noisy and dusty. Sometimes, they may travel to homes or construction sites to take measurements or install finished products.

Job Prospects

Chances of getting employed as a Joiner and Cabinetmaker are good due to the boom in commercial and residential construction

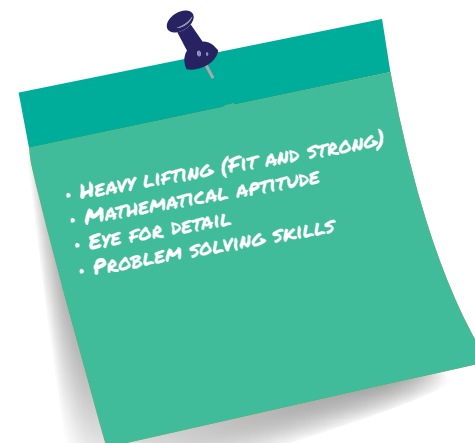
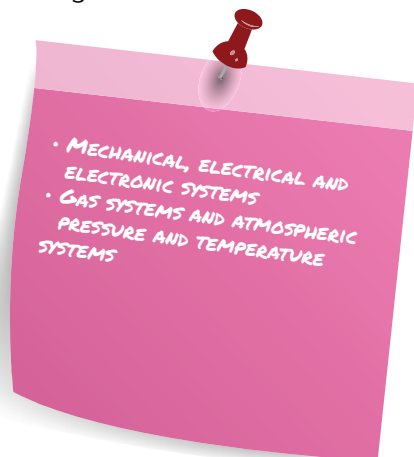


projects. Remuneration varies depending on experience and level of responsibility. Joiners and Cabinetmakers may earn more if they work overtime, are on call, or are self-employed.

You too can live your passion and become a Joiner and Cabinetmaker. They need to have steady hands, good hand-eye co-ordination and be reasonably fit and strong, as there may be some heavy lifting required. If you are alert and safety-conscious when using tools and machinery; accurate, with an eye for detail; able to visualise a finished product; able to follow instructions and good at problem solving, you are a good candidate.



It was a true case of humble beginnings. My machinery arrived and I was able to take on jobs and grow my customer base. That was 2009. The rest, as they say, is history.



LIVE YOUR PASSION

03

Stanford Lambert

Hairdresser & Beautician

There's a saying that goes: Find a job you love, and you will never work a single day in your life. Meet Stanford Lambert. Stanford is a Hairdresser and Beautician, a driven and passionate 21-year old man who is making it big in a world dominated by women. This is his story.

Stanford grew up in the streets of Khomasdal, the youngest of four siblings. Asked as to when exactly he became interested in the beauty industry, Stanford laughingly responds that it all came naturally. "Somehow, growing up with my three older sisters and their girlfriends, I always seem to be surrounded by typical girl-talk conversations about the latest hairstyles, cosmetic treatments and nail and body care products. So, I guess you could say that I am the result of my early surroundings.

Regardless, the most important part, I would say, is that I love this world. I believe in my talent. It is my passion", he notes.

The Early Years

After completing his Grade 12 at the Academia High School, Stanford enrolled at the Shadonai Beauty Academy, in the capital. He did so with the full support of his mother and three sisters. "You often hear about friends whose families are pushing them to pursue careers they are not necessarily interested in. I've been really lucky and very fortunate, I guess, as I have had my family's full support and backing from the onset to pursue a career in the beauty industry. What matters to them is that I am happy, doing what I love", a confident Stanford says.





His advice to other young men wishing to enter the beauty industry is equally straightforward. “I have very little understanding of parents who saddle their kids with expectations that are really none of their business. You only have to answer to yourself. If it’s what you want to do and you know it’ll make you happy, then do it. Women are entering male-dominated areas. So, men too can enter female-dominated areas”, he says.

A Busy World

Although Stanford graduated as a qualified Beauty and Massage Therapist, he specialises today as a Hairdresser at the Shadonai Beauty Academy’s salon. He has over a relatively short period of time build up a sizeable clientele, and is well known for his skill in cutting the hair of men. “Yes, I have my male clients that always come back, as they trust

no one else to give them haircuts. But, what is so interesting about my job is that I am not limited to haircuts and trims only. I perform a variety of different tasks in the course of a working day, including conducting skin analyses, advising clients on skin and body care, performing facial or body massage and treatments, including spa therapy, reflexology and aromatherapy. This is also sometimes extended into nail and hair treatment”, he explains.

A normal working day for Stanford starts at eight o’clock and sometimes can continue until late into the evenings. “Although clients make appointments, you never know what lies ahead. A day at the office can include all three aspects of my training - hairstyling, doing nails and massages. It can be physically taxing and as such I make it a point to stay fit and healthy. It’s all about being on your feet for long periods, good

hand-eye coordination and steady hands”, Stanford shares.

Client Service

The beauty industry is a cutthroat environment. You have one opportunity to live up to a new client’s unique expectations. It’s all about grabbing the opportunity. If you don’t, you lose out on a customer. “The saying that you are only as good as your last job rings true, as dissatisfied or difficult clients prove to be challenging especially when it comes to hair and nails jobs. Comebacks clients and extending your clientele base has its fair amount of constraints. Injuries such as cuts or burns can also be a hindrance”, Stanford relates.

Stanford is passionate about what he does. His infectious enthusiasm for service and the support he gets from family, friends and peers motivate him to grow and achieve

more. “My mother and family have always been a pillar of support and strength especially with regards to encouraging him to go forth in a female-dominated industry. I base the core of my strength in Christ and I’m a strong believer in the church and its teachings. My colleagues are also a source of encouragement for me to continue in the trade and foster on”, he says.

Growth

The international cosmetics and beauty industry has always been a multi-billion dollar industry.

Africa has become the new frontier and international companies are investing millions into penetrating the African market with their product and service offerings. In turn, this creates opportunity for skilled practitioners such as Stanford to render such services.

“Doing what I do, I contribute to the growth of the industry, in the sense of rendering a service to clients who appreciate and value what I do. I am able to take care of myself and I am contributing to the upkeep of my family home, which has many returns of its own”, he notes.

Future Plans

Stanford has ambitious plans. He, one day, wishes to open his own beauty establishment that will offer a comprehensive service package to clients. He realises that he is operating in a very competitive market and that a successful transition will require him to acquire solid business management skills.

But, for now, Stanford is making the most of his opportunity to work at Shadonai, an established and leading service provider in the local beauty and cosmetics industry. More importantly, he embraces the fact that his choice to take up a career in a female-dominated industry is inspiring other young men to do the same – a role he is more than willing to play. “If you’re worrying about getting hired because you’re a man, you shouldn’t. Yeah, cosmetology is always gonna be a female-heavy profession, but it’s not that men aren’t welcome. They just usually choose something else. And hey, not for nothing here, but being the only man surrounded by tons of women is not always a bad thing. Plenty of dudes I know would love to be in that situation. In theory, anyhow”, he says.

Stanford Lambert - A man of many talents, a trailblazer, a torchbearer. His story teaches us that while we encourage girl children to enter male-dominated areas, we should equally support more boy children to consider career options in female-dominated areas. More importantly, that providing our children, regardless of gender, with the best opportunity for bright and fulfilling work, should always be the priority. That parents should support their children to pursue their own dreams, and not their dreams for their children. For some children, it may be the thrill to make a new scientific discovery or designing a new technology. For others, it may be the satisfaction and passion to give comfort and care. Stanford has opted for the latter. He is living his passion. And his family and peers are living his passion with him.

Doing what I do, I contribute to the growth of the industry, in the sense of rendering a service to clients who appreciate and value what I do. I am able to take care of myself and I am contributing to the upkeep of my family home, which has many returns of its own.

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**What does it
take to become a
Hairdresser
& Beautician?**



Hairdressers/barbers cut, colour and style hair. Barbers also shave and trim hair, moustaches and beards. Hairdressers/barbers consult with clients about the style or cut they want; cut and blow-wave clients' hair; wash; sell haircare products; treat and recommend products for hair and scalp problems.

Skills and Knowledge

Hairdressers/barbers need to have skill in different hairdressing methods, including cutting, styling, perming and colouring techniques; knowledge of past and current hairstyles and trends; an understanding of hair and skin types, and how they react with different types of chemicals such as colouring products; knowledge of health and hygiene regulations; and creative and artistic skills.

Hairdressers/barbers who run their own businesses also need to have bookkeeping and management skills.

Training

To qualify as a Hairdresser/barber, you can enroll at registered training institutions for a programme, which typically covers theoretical and practical training and industry attachment in preparing you to provide hairdressing consultation services in a very competitive market.

As you progress through the training programme, you will learn to colour, cut and style hair using a variety of techniques and develop and enhance your creative hairdressing skills. Business management is a key training component. Following successful completion, successful students will be able to progress to a career as a stylist or a hairdresser in a salon.

Working Conditions

Hairdressers/barbers usually work on weekdays and may work on weekends and some evenings. They usually work in hairdressing salons or barbershops, which can be very busy. The job requires frequent reaching to cut or style the client's hair, which can tire the arms and hands and also deal with a constant flow of customers who have different personalities and expectations. Overall, hairdressers should possess excellent stamina to withstand the physical and emotional demands of the job.

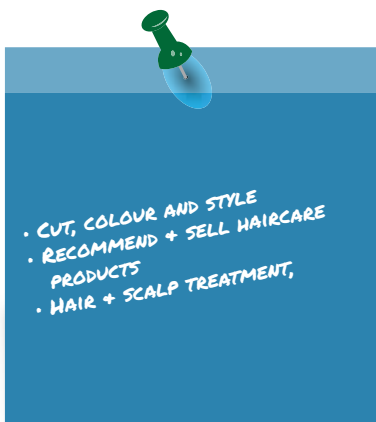
Job Prospects

Many Hairdressers/barbers, especially those that are self-employed and own salons, nowadays venture into beauty therapy and also offer and provide treatments such as facials, make-up and nail painting to clients. Wages and earnings increase as they progress through their training, learn more skills and service more



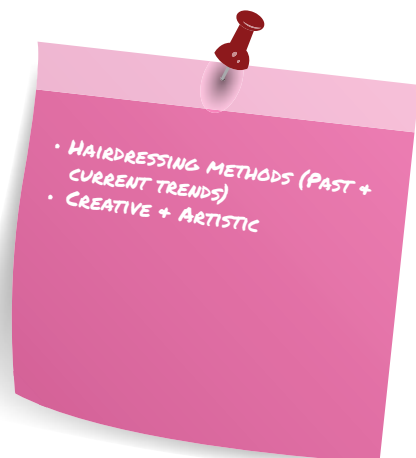
clients. Self-employed hairdressers/barbers may earn more depending on the success of their business.

You too can live your passion and become a Hairdresser/barber. If you are good at communicating and listening; friendly and polite; organised; able to follow instructions; accurate, with an eye for detail; and able to do basic mathematics, you are a good candidate.



It's all about being on your feet for long periods, good hand-eye coordination and steady hands.

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LIVE YOUR PASSION

21

Martha Abed

Massage Therapist

What at first seemed a debilitating condition, has spurred on this young lady to become a sought-after massage therapist at a local spa.

Meet 25-year old Martha Abed. She wasn't born visually impaired. However, diagnosed at an early age with an inherited, degenerative eye disease that causes severe vision impairment, Martha started losing her sight. Today, Martha Abed has no eyesight, but she has turned her disability into an asset. This is her story.

Career Choice

Martha Abed is a massage therapist. Using her hands, fingers, forearms, elbows, and sometimes feet, she treats clients by using touch to manipulate and knead the muscles and other soft tissues of the body.

With their touch, massage therapists relieve pain, help heal injuries, improve circulation, relieve stress, increase relaxation, and aid in the general wellness of clients. Massage therapists also provide guidance on stretching, strengthening, overall relaxation, and how to improve posture. "I really love what I do. It gives me a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. Being visually impaired, it's so easy to fall into a trap of self-pity and depression. However, practicing as a massage therapist gives me the motivation to face challenges head-on and to rise above my circumstances", Martha says.

Early Challenges

Martha's mother enrolled her at the Eluwa Special School at Ongwediva. Her school years were





not easy. Her sight deteriorated and by age 12, Martha lost her eyesight completely. She dreamt of becoming a Psychologist or a Life Science and Agriculture teacher. "School wasn't easy at all. Being visually impaired, somehow you realise that your dreams might just be out of your reach. But, I kept on dreaming. I simply had to. To stop dreaming would've been very self-defeating", she notes.

But, struggling to cope at school, Martha failed her Grade 10 examinations. An attempt to complete her Grade 10 through the Namibia College for Open Learning, NAMCOL, also did not bear any fruit. However, this did not deter this young woman from staying positive and to make the best of her situation. "I realised that despite these setbacks, I had to do something with my life. I couldn't sit idle at home and I did not want to be a liability to others. And when the opportunity came to join Nomad Spa and undergo

training as a massage therapist, I grabbed it with both hands. Yes, I might not be a Psychologist or a Life Science Teacher today, but still I am in a position where I can help others and make their lives better. I am making a contribution", she explains.

Exciting Career Path

Today, Martha is employed at the Nomad African Spa, on the corner of Sanderburg Road and Jan Jonker Street in the capital.

Nomad has recently won an award as the best day spa in Africa. Specialising in African-based treatments, the spa offers a wide range of packages, such as the Night Spa Experience, where you and a loved one can enjoy multiple treatments followed by a delicious dinner under the African sky.

It is at the very same establishment where Martha received her training. And within a short period of time,

she has established herself as a favourite amongst clients. "The Nomad family has been very supportive. We are a close-knit and caring group and my colleagues go out of their way to accommodate me and to make my work easy. They always encourage me to do my best, but most importantly, their support has made it possible for me to dream again. They are my second family and I love them all to bits", she says.

Dexterity and Communication

Massage Therapists need to understand the human body. They need to be fit as they may give several treatments during a workday and have to stay on their feet throughout appointments. Therapists must be strong and able to exert pressure through a variety of movements when manipulating a client's muscles.

Martha fits the mould. Although small in stature, she is strong. Proof

that dynamites indeed come in small packages. "Clients are often surprised that a woman so small in stature can be so strong. People often think that you need to be big and strong for this type of work. That's not true at all. In fact, what is more important is that you are skilled at what your doing. I need to be fit as I may give several treatments during a workday and have to stay on my feet throughout appointments. I must be strong and able to exert pressure through a variety of movements when manipulating a client's muscles", she explains.

She also highlights communication skills as another key skill massage therapists need to master. "Massages normally happen in a very private and intimate setting. Communication is key to a successful massage. Clients need to feel that they can trust you and that you care. I make it a point to listen carefully to every client during the

course of a treatment. And many of my clients appreciate the special attention I pay to their problem areas”, she highlights.

Fighting Perception

For centuries, visually impaired people have found work as massage therapists. It is claimed that their heightened and superior sense of touch make them better therapists. Massage therapists who are visually impaired rely very much on touch alone. And the right touch is the key element in massage therapy.

Martha is a good example. She brings a positive energy that brightens up the lives of everyone she comes in touch with. “The biggest reward is always a satisfied client. Nothing beats the thrill of their positive feedback. That you were able to help them and that they are more comfortable, relieved and relaxed, because of what you have done. That’s the biggest reward, indeed”, she relates.

Visiting with Martha, it is abundantly clear that she is someone who loves people and loves to help them with her special skills. She says while sighted people tend to make judgments based on visual impressions, it is different for her. “I see the spirit of people. Sometimes I do sense that people are a bit uncomfortable when they

realise that I am visually impaired. But, I give them the benefit of the doubt and take it on as a challenge to win them over. They come back and when they do, they ask for me”, she says.

Passion

Martha underscores that passion in what one embarks on; confidence and resilience to make it work; trust in one’s instincts; and an unrelenting quest for growth and success. “I have been lucky, I guess. Despite struggling at school and initial setbacks, I am now in a space where I enjoy a lot of support and encouragement from my friends and colleagues, who care about me and who want me to succeed and grow in this chosen career path.

They keep me focused and positive and they encourage me to grow. I am so fortunate to have them around me”, she notes.

People seeing her disability, and not her as a human being, does not faze her, at all. “I simply can’t allow myself to be distracted and derailed by able-bodied people and their unfounded fears of people with disabilities. However, what I can do is to do my best. And demonstrate that although I’m visually impaired, I am very able. I am able to do my work, I am able to earn an honest living and I am able to support those around me, including my family. In fact, come to think of it, I am not disabled. I am just differently-abled”, Martha shares.

Martha appreciates that her story serves as an inspiration to other people living with disabilities to pursue their own dreams for a better life. “I am happy if my story can inspire them. Living with disability is not easy at all, and as a society, we must do more to support people living with disabilities, in a manner that is truly inclusive. Paying mere lip service to inclusivity will not help us. It’s about action and more action”, she highlights.

Martha Abed. Courageous. Unapologetic. Determined. Positive. Confident. Her story teaches us to be comfortable in our imperfection. That the difference between a successful person and others is not a lack in ability, strength, or knowledge, but rather a lack in will. That each of us has a personal calling that’s as unique as a fingerprint. And that the best way to succeed is to discover what you love and then find a way to offer it to others in the form of service.

Practicing as a massage therapist gives me the motivation to face challenges head-on and to rise above my circumstances.

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**What does it
take to become a
Massage Therapist?**



Massage therapists treat clients by using touch to manipulate the muscles and other soft tissues of the body. They use their hands, fingers, forearms, elbows, and sometimes feet to knead muscles and soft tissues of the body. With their touch, they relieve pain, help heal injuries, improve circulation, relieve stress, increase relaxation, and aid in the general wellness of clients. They provide guidance on stretching, strengthening, overall relaxation, and how to improve posture.

Skills and Knowledge

Massage Therapists need to understand the human body. They need to be fit as they may give several treatments during a workday and have to stay on their feet throughout appointments. Therapists must be strong and able to exert pressure through a variety of movements when manipulating a client's muscles.

Training

To qualify as a Massage Therapist, you can enroll at registered training institutions for a programme, which typically will cover classroom study, hands-on practice of massage techniques and industry placement. Programmes include subjects such as physiology, which is the study of organs and tissues; kinesiology, which is the study of motion and body mechanics; business management; and ethics. Massage therapists can specialize in many different types of massage or modalities, including Swedish massage, deep-tissue massage, and sports massage. Most therapists specialize in several modalities, which require different techniques.

As you progress through the training programme, you will learn to tailor an appointment to a client's specific needs and build comfort according to client specifications.

Working Conditions

Massage therapists work in an array of settings, such as spas, franchised clinics, physicians' offices, hotels, and fitness centers. Some therapists also travel to clients' homes or offices, while others work from home. A massage can be as short as 5–10 minutes, or could last more than an hour.

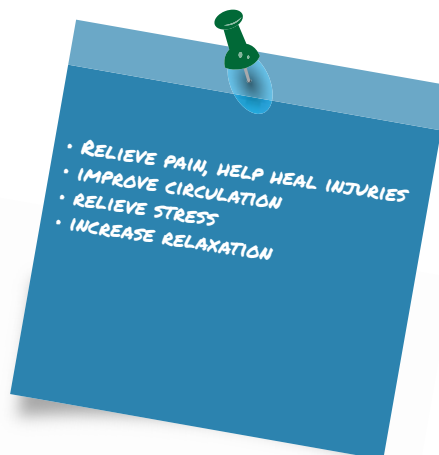
Because they work by appointment in most cases, schedules and number of hours worked vary considerably. Moreover, because of the strength and endurance needed to give a massage, many therapists cannot perform massage services 8 hours per day, 5 days per week. Therapists, especially those who are self-employed, may also spend time recording clients' notes, marketing, booking clients, washing linens, and conducting other general business tasks.

Job Prospects

Steady growth in the tourism and hospitality sector is resulting in increased demand for massage services. More healthcare providers now understand the benefits of massage, and these services are becoming part of treatment plans. Many sports teams hire therapists to help athletes rehabilitate from injuries. Referrals are an important source of work and may help increase job opportunities. Joining a professional association also can help build strong

contacts and further increase the likelihood of steady work.

You too can live your passion and become a Massage Therapist. If you are a good communicator, fit and strong, love working with people and are interested in creating comfort for others, you are a good candidate.



The biggest reward is always a satisfied client. Nothing beats the thrill of their positive feedback.

”



LIVE YOUR PASSION

23

Elizabeth Mutileni

Water Treatment Technician

Water is one of the most important substances on earth. All plants and animals must have water to survive. It is important that the water people drink and use for other purposes is potable, meaning clean and free of germs.

Meet 24-year old Elizabeth Mutileni, a young lady who is passionate about water and who has made it her job to ensure that she does her part in ensuring that the water we use everyday is safe for human consumption. She is a Water Treatment Technician. This is her story.

Early Fascination

It was an early fascination with the sound of boiling of water that sparked what is today a seemingly indestructible love affair between Elizabeth Mutileni and water.

Growing up at the Oshinyadhila village, a few kilometers outside Oshakati in Oshana, Elizabeth recalls how she first heard of NamWater, when a friend told her that her father was an employee of the national water carrier. Her fascination with water and taps grew stronger from that point onwards, and it was clear to the young Elizabeth, that she would one day end up in the water sector. “Our teachers also told us about cooking water and this changed the way I thought about water. I was very intrigued about how water ended up in taps. It just fascinated me. I would walk past the dam at Oshakati and tell myself that one day I will come back and work there at the dam”, she shares.





Life as an Orphan

Elizabeth lost her mother at an early age and was raised by her paternal grandmother. A product of the Omuhama Combined School and the Mweshipandeka High School, she has fond memories of a carefree and untroubled village life. However, as an orphan under her grandmother's watchful eye, the young Elizabeth soon came to realise that she one day would have to leave the village and find her place in the world.

"My grandmother really was my everything. Despite the hardships of village life, she tried everything to raise me well and had big dreams that I attend university and make something of my life. She raised me to respect others and to work hard for what I want. I continue to live by these values she instilled in me from an early age", Elizabeth says.

However, it wasn't always smooth sailing. Elizabeth wasn't happy with

her Grade 12 results, and since her grandmother's wish was that she enrolls at university, she registered at the Namibia College of Open Learning instead, in an effort to improve her results. She was also concerned that her grandmother would've struggled to keep pace with university tuition, books and accommodation fees. "My granny was really fighting for me to enroll at the University of Namibia. But, as fate would have it, I saw an advert in the newspaper by the Namwater HRDC calling for applicants for its Water Treatment course and applied. The rest as they say is history. Although I had my concerns about their aptitude test, I knew I always had a strong aptitude in Chemistry and Mathematics. I was accepted and ended up in a field that has fascinated me since childhood", she notes.

Exciting Career Path

Today, Elizabeth is a qualified Water Treatment Technician. Using

test equipment and color analysis standards measurements of water quality, she collects and tests water samples and make adjustments to the chemicals used to make water potable and safe. She records meter and gauge readings on specified forms, and add chemicals, such as ammonia, chlorine, or lime, to disinfect and deodorize water and other liquids. Other tasks include maintaining tanks, filter beds and other work areas, using hand tools and power tools; and repairing equipment.

She is now employed by NamWater, as a Water Care Assistant Instructor at its Human Resource Development Centre outside Okahandja and is recognised by supervisors and peers alike as a driven and committed individual who performs her work diligently and meticulously. As the state-owned bulk water supplier, NamWater operates dams, pipelines and water treatment plants throughout the

country. Elizabeth now shares in the responsibility of training the next generation of water treatment technicians, who in turn will be responsible for ensuring that water delivered to NamWater clients, is safe and potable. "I am really passionate about water, so it was very easy for me to embark on this career path. I am confident and happy in my choice, because there will always be a need for Water Treatment Technicians. Urbanisation and national efforts to explore and implement viable and sustainable water provision alternatives continue to boost the need for qualified and skilled technicians", Elizabeth says.

Independent Woman

Today, Elizabeth is an independent young woman, with a bright future ahead of her. As an orphan, she has faced many challenges in her young life. But, her dream for a better life and her resolve to not disappoint those who helped her along the

way, including her grandmother and her cousin, who with his wife took her in when she moved to the capital, has driven her to overcome all the odds stacked against her. “My cousin and his wife are my new parents. I am so fortunate because they treat me as one of their own and continue to encourage me to excel in what I do. I know that I can always rely on their continued support and encouragement”, she shares.

In honouring her grandmother’s wish to earn a university qualification, Elizabeth now dreams of enrolling for further studies in Water Care and Treatment at the Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa. “I am a firm believer that education empowers people. Therefore, I do not want to stop here because I want to go on and learn about all other aspects of the water care industry. The Tshwane University of Technology degree course is considered a very comprehensive and wide-ranging course and I am confident that acquiring this qualification would allow me to grow and develop as a specialist in this field. The good thing is that I am employed now, and that I can save up to enroll”, Elizabeth notes.

Rolemodel

Elizabeth encourages other young Namibians to consider qualifying themselves as Water Treatment Technicians.

“Whenever given the opportunity,

I speak to school learners to consider enrolling for water care programmes at registered institutions. I enjoyed my training and the passion of my instructors rubbed off on me and prepared me for the work I do today. So I tell them about the theoretical and practical training aspects, industry attachment at water care and wastewater treatment plants and the work we do in the laboratories. I do it because I love my work and because I believe that a career in water care and treatment is an exciting and viable choice”, she says.

“The laboratory work is especially exciting. As you progress through the training programme, you learn about chemicals and instruments and how to interpret readings. It’s

like being a real scientist”, she adds.

Passion

Elizabeth’s inspiring story teaches us that all of us can go as far as we dream, think and imagine. The secret to her success seems to be the fact that she is taking small and realistic steps towards achieving her dreams.

“I am just happy that I can be considered a productive citizen of our country and that I can play a part in its development. I also embrace the responsibility of being a positive influence in the lives of my colleagues and the interns I works with. Because others have invested their time and energy in my growth and success, I need

to take up this responsibility of returning this gift to others, especially in my current teaching position where I can plant the seeds of knowledge in the minds of our country’s future generation of Water Treatment Technicians”, she explains.

A driven, single-minded and determined young woman whose story teaches us the true meaning of success. That success means having the courage, the determination, and the will to become the person you believe you were meant to be. That success is not only measured by what we accomplish, but by the courage with which we have maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds.

“I believe that you can actually create the life you want. It all depends on how daring you desire it. You just need to keep the faith, be patient, prayerful and work towards the fulfillment of your dreams”, she concludes.

Elizabeth Mutileni. Focusing the full power of all she is on her passion and burning desire to achieve. She is a Water Treatment Technician. She is living her passion.

I was very intrigued about how water ended up in taps. It just fascinated me.





**What does it
take to become a
Water Treatment
Technician?**



Using test equipment and color analysis standards measurements of water quality, Water treatment technicians collect and test water samples, and make adjustments to the chemicals used to make water potable and safe. They record meter and gauge readings on specified forms, and add chemicals, such as ammonia, chlorine, or lime, to disinfect and deodorize water and other liquids. Other tasks include maintaining tanks, filter beds and other work areas, using hand tools and power tools; and repairing equipment.

Skills and Knowledge

Water Treatment Technicians must be capable of taking measurements and interpreting that information to improve water quality. A career in water plant technology requires a strong aptitude in chemistry and mathematics. Candidates also demonstrate knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance. Technicians work under the supervision of other water plant operators, and they must be able to efficiently take direction.

Training

To qualify as a Water Treatment Technician, you can enroll at registered training institutions for a programme which typically covers theoretical and practical training and industry attachment in preparing technicians to work in water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, environmental laboratories and in the broader environmental industry.

As you progress through the training programme, you will learn to monitor gauges, dials, or other

indicators to make sure a machine is working properly; performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed; and troubleshooting causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.

Working Conditions

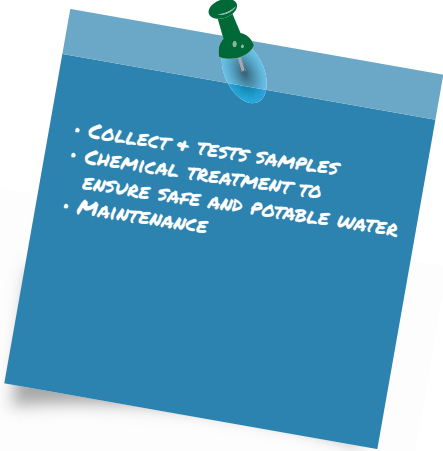
Water Treatment Technicians perform their work under sometimes periodically disagreeable working conditions, which include working outdoors, sometimes in adverse weather, exposed to water, mud, dirt, grease, fumes, chemicals and infectious waste. Sometimes, the physically demanding manual work may require heavy lifting, climbing, standing and walking for sustained periods of time. Incumbents are often required to take stand-by duties that include being on call after hours and responding to emergency problems at any hour, as needed.

Job Prospects

Urbanisation and national efforts to explore and implement viable and sustainable water provision alternatives continue to boost the need for qualified and skilled Water Treatment Technicians.

You too can live your passion and become a Water Treatment Technician. If you are mechanically inclined, fit and strong, and are interested in creating comfort for others, you are a good candidate.



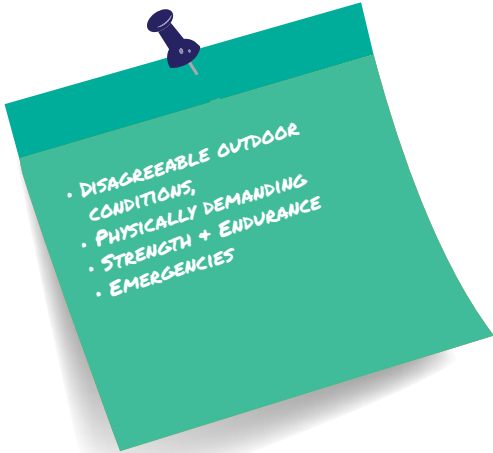
- 
- COLLECT + TESTS SAMPLES
 - CHEMICAL TREATMENT TO ENSURE SAFE AND POTABLE WATER
 - MAINTENANCE

- 
- CLASSROOM STUDY + HANDS-ON PRACTICE
 - JOB PLACEMENT
 - TROUBLESHOOTING

- 
- CHEMISTRY + MATHEMATICS
 - MECHANICAL SKILLS
 - SUPERVISED ENVIRONMENT

I am confident and happy in my choice, because there will always be a need for Water Treatment Technicians.

”

- 
- DISAGREEABLE OUTDOOR CONDITIONS,
 - PHYSICALLY DEMANDING
 - STRENGTH + ENDURANCE
 - EMERGENCIES

- 
- MECHANICALLY INCLINED
 - FIT AND STRONG

LIVE YOUR PASSION

24

Williams Ngupahua

Solar Installation Technician

A Trailblazer for the Solar Energy Sector

Solar energy systems are steadily gaining in popularity and today there are more sought after than ever. In fact, in the near future, solar technology might well be one of the primary forms of power for our day-to-day needs.

Meet Williams Ngupahua. A qualified electrician and budding entrepreneur trained at the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre, who has ventured into the field of solar energy installations and who has established his company, Speedy Solar, as a leading and credible service provider in this growing and exciting field. This is his story.

Childhood Dreams

Williams hails from Otjiharuua in

the great Omaheke region where he completed his secondary school at the Mokgandeni Tlabanello High School.

From a very young age, Williams demonstrated a keen interest in all things technical - always eager to fix things in and around the home. "I always knew that I was more technically-inclined, because I really enjoyed doing things with my hands. While still at school, I started fixing stoves, radios and other electrical appliances. And I always knew that one day I was going to become an electrician", Williams shares.

So it came as no surprise to his family when Williams announced that he applied to qualify as an electrician at the Windhoek VTC. "While my friends and classmates were submitting applications to





the University of Namibia and the former Polytechnic of Namibia, I only applied to the Windhoek VTC. Mind you, my marks were good enough for enrollment at university or technikon, too. But, Windhoek VTC admitted me in 2001 and my dream came true", he notes.

Captivated by Solar Energy

With fossil fuels, such as gas and oil expected to be depleted in the not too distant future, it is becoming more and more apparent that making full use of solar energy is now more imperative than ever. It was during his time as a trainee at the Windhoek VTC, that Williams was first introduced to the exciting world of solar energy. "I became completely captivated by how energy from the sun, which is so abundant and comes to us free every day, could be converted into electricity. What fascinated me more was that compared to non-renewable fossil fuel energy, solar energy is also considerably

less expensive to produce, much more environmentally-friendly", he explains.

While his peers were focused on entering the field as ordinary electricians, Williams saw an opportunity to enter what was then still considered a relatively new and untapped market. "The local solar sector was still very much in its infancy stages then. And I knew that I would encounter challenges in attracting clients, should I decide to venture into this field. But, I had a vision and I realised that I simply had to make work of it. That if I worked hard, the clients would come", Williams says.

Young Entrepreneur

After registering his company, Williams started small by selling and installing affordable and compact solar systems to rural households, during a time when people did not know a lot about these systems and their benefits. "In many rural

areas, there's no electricity. When my rural clients saw that one panel can power a radio and a few light bulbs, they started buying into solar energy. You will find that a single installation at one village resulted in orders from five or six households in the same vicinity. A starter kit amounted to about 400 dollars then. People came back and wanted bigger systems and the demand grew", he explains.

Today, Williams as an early entrant to the solar installation market, continues to lead the way in advocating for solar energy as a renewable energy source, especially in rural communities. He is now reaping the rewards of what seemed a risky decision at the time to enter this market. Today, his company, Speedy Solar is a reputable service provider in a sector that continues to grow. "Solar energy is much more affordable today. People now understand the benefits of renewable energy, for example

how solar geysers, which can last between ten to fifteen years, can save you thousands of dollars over the same period. It's a no-brainer, really", he shares.

Diversified Business

Speedy Solar has also ventured into the area of rural water supply. Not only does the company install solar systems to replace generators and windmills, it also sinks boreholes in rural areas to improve the access of communities to potable water. According to Williams, this is one arm of the business that continues to grow from strength to strength.

"It's really all about giving people what they need. Consider that access to water remains a key developmental challenge, especially in rural Namibia, where perhaps there is sufficient underground water, but not enough boreholes from which to extract water. Also consider that windmills and generators are unreliable

and expensive to maintain, and it became clear to us that we need to diversify into drilling boreholes on which we can then install solar pump systems”, he explains. “We have been very busy in the Omakange area where we have sank several boreholes and installations. It’s so rewarding to see how the work we do changes the lives of people. We are making a difference”, a proud Williams says.

Solar Champion

Williams is a passionate trailblazer for the solar installations sector. As a small and medium enterprise, Speedy Solar has invested considerably in the training of young Namibians empowering them with the technical skills to enter the sector.

For Williams, it is not about training people that may compete with his business, at all. Rather, it is about creating opportunities for other young men and women. I have trained about twenty people in this field. Our in-service training not only focuses on the technical competencies, we also make it a point to share the basics of entrepreneurship and business management with such candidates. It’s not about training a potential competitor at all. Rather, it’s about empowering others to become independent”, he explains. “In fact, if you ask me what my biggest achievement is, I will say, not the financial success and business growth, but that we are able to train others”, he adds.

However, Williams laments the lack of financial support available to other upcoming solar installation technicians, who want to establish their own businesses. “It’s tough out there. I know of many graduate contractors who have landed sizable purchase orders, but still the commercial banks seem reluctant to extend collateral to get them off the ground”, he notes.

Bright Future

Today, Speedy Solar is an accredited by the Ministry of Mines and Energy as a reputable technician, supplier and installer of solar energy systems, for installations financed under the Ministry’s Solar Revolving Fund. “Our Government is doing well,

through the fund, to broaden access to solar energy systems. And yes, while being an accredited service provider for the Ministry helps in sustaining the business, competition is tough. There are many other accredited companies. For us therefore, customer satisfaction is what separates us from the rest. We always need to do our best, no matter how small the installation”, Williams says.

Although Speedy Solar continues to grow in leaps and bounds, Williams recognizes the support of his mentor and benefactor, Bennie Amuenje, who backed him financially and who encouraged him to persist during the difficult times. “I could not have done this without the support of Uncle Bennie, who

remains my business mentor. My advice to other entrepreneurs therefore is to find seasoned and experienced people who can lend a helping hand and offer you good advice when times are tough. Believe me, things can go ugly and you may lose hope. But, a good mentor can get you back on track and motivate you to persevere”, he concludes.

Williams Ngupahua. Solar Installation Technician, Teacher, Entrepreneur, Pioneer, Visionary. His story teaches us that where there’s a will, there’s a way. That our dreams are within our reach, if we believe in ourselves, and work hard towards achieving our objectives. That success starts with self-belief in who we are and what unique contribution we can make to the world. His passion for renewable energy has made him a torchbearer for this sector. He is living his passion.

I had a vision and I realised that I simply had to make work of it. That if I worked hard, the clients would come.

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**What does it
take to become a
Solar Installation
Technician?**



Solar Installation Technicians install, service and maintain solar photovoltaic systems. Sunlight is an ongoing supply and solar installation technicians help to convert this natural resource to electricity by installing solar panels on roofs or other types of structures, such as free-standing arrays. They assemble, maintain or repair panels on grids, and sometimes work under the guidance of an engineer or advanced technician.

Skills and Knowledge

Solar Installation Technicians must have a wide range of knowledge, which they can gain through training programmes, or even on-the-job training. Responsibilities can vary, but include the need to be able to read drawings and schematics, knowledge of local code and regulations, and understanding the current requirements for the electrical circuit of a solar panel system. Solar Installation Technicians must know how to apply weather sealing to the panel or system, put in interconnected wiring and test voltages to ensure the system operates within acceptable limits.

Training

Training programmes cover a variety of topics, such as system components, design, installation and safety procedures. As you progress through the training programme, you will become familiar with the design, installation and service techniques of solar systems in residential and commercial buildings. Solar system manufacturers may also provide specific training on a product. Such training usually includes a system overview and proper installation techniques of the manufacturer's products. Experience in construction

may shorten a new employee's training time. For example, workers with experience as an electrician, roofer or carpenter, typically already understand and can perform basic construction duties. In addition, those with knowledge of electrical work, such as electricians, are highly valued by contractors.

Working Conditions

Because Solar Installation Technicians are employed in solar power, much of their work occurs outside, or even in an attic or crawl space of the place where they are installing solar panels. Travelling is an important part of the job as work is typically done on a client's site. Most work is done during regular hours, although some technicians may need to be available for emergencies over weekends. Solar Installation Technicians risk falls from ladders and roofs, electrical shocks, and burns from hot equipment and materials while installing and maintaining PV systems. Those working on roofs must use required fall protection equipment.

Job Prospects

The use of solar technology is increasing in popularity as more and more people are using energy from the sun in an effort to become greener. Additionally, the government is backing the installation of solar products through subsidies and incentive programmes. A decrease in the cost of panels and systems for residential homes, coupled with improved efficiency of these panels are growing the demand for such systems.

You too can live your passion and become a Solar Installation Technician.



If you are customer and detail-oriented, have strong mechanical skills and physical stamina and strength, you are a good candidate.

- REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS
- OUTDOORS
- HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT

- DESIGN, INSTALLATION
- MAINTENANCE
- EXPERIENCE IN CONSTRUCTION
- INDUSTRY APPRENTICESHIP

- INSTALL, SERVICE, MAINTAIN
- SOLAR PHOTO-VOLTAIC SYSTEMS
- ASSEMBLING, REPAIRING PANELS ON GRIDS
- PERFORM ROUTINE TESTING + MAINTENANCE

Customer satisfaction is what separates us from the rest. We always need to do our best, no matter how small the installation.

”

- READ DRAWINGS + SCHEMATICS
- LOCAL CODE + REGULATIONS
- ELECTRICAL CURRENT REQUIREMENTS
- WEATHER SEALING

- CUSTOMER + DETAIL-ORIENTED
- MECHANICAL APTITUDE
- SPATIAL PERCEPTION
- PHYSICAL STAMINA + STRENGTH

LIVE YOUR PASSION

04

Kavehungua Uakurama

Firefighter

Making her Mark in a High-Risk Environment

Firefighters control and put out fires, and respond to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk. They typically put out fires and find and rescue victims in burning buildings or in other emergency situations.

And while firefighting remains a male-dominated world, more and more women today fight fire alongside their male counterparts. Meet 27-year old Kavehungua Uakurama. She is a firefighter. This is her story:

Marketing vs. Firefighting

Kavehungua was born in Windhoek. She attended primary school at St. Barnabas Primary and enrolled

for a marketing degree at the then Polytechnic of Namibia, now Namibia University of Science and Technology, after she completed her Grade 12 at Eldorado High in Khomasdal, in 2006. Looking forward to entering the corporate world after graduation, Kavehungua's dreams took a bit of a setback when she fell pregnant. "During my fourth year at the Polytechnic, I fell pregnant with my firstborn. Needless to say, it derailed my academic programme and I had no choice than to put the studies on the backburner for a while. It was a stressful time. I was really looking forward to graduating, but all of a sudden, I had to change my priorities to prepare for motherhood", she explains.

But, determined as she has always been, Kavehungua, after giving birth,





went back in 2011, and completed her degree the next year. It was during this time when she learned about an opportunity at the City of Windhoek's Fire Department. She applied, and the rest as they say, is history. "I knew at the time that the local marketing industry had become very saturated and I decided to take a shot at firefighting, when I saw an advertisement in a local daily that the local Fire Department was looking for new recruits. My friends also encouraged me to give it a go. I ended up making the cut and you know what? I also ended up in a career that I love", she notes.

Self-Sacrifice

Self-sacrifice means you are equally concerned with the wellbeing of others, as much you are with your own. Those who possess this trait have a natural propensity to help others. It is a trait that fire departments look for in new

recruits and a trait that Kavehunga possesses. She is courageous. Willing to take risks and make sacrifices to help others.

"What I really love about this job is the opportunity to help others. Firefighting is a job of service. It's about a willingness and passion to attend to those in need; a willingness to serve and protect; and a passion to be there for others when they need help most. This is what I love most about my job", Kavehunga explains.

Dangerous Work

Firefighters have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations. They often encounter dangerous situations, including collapsing floors and walls and overexposure to flames and smoke. They wear protective gear, which often can be very heavy and hot, to help lower these risks.

"It is true. Firefighting is very dangerous and taxing work. We work 24-hour, sometimes 48-hour shifts. It requires loads of self-discipline, self-motivation and focus to succeed. But, Firefighters are selfless people. What drives us in overcoming the fear of being injured in the line of duty, is the knowledge that we can be of assistance to someone in need", Kavehunga notes.

While Kavehunga admits to be attracted by the excitement and adrenaline-rush that come with an emergency call, she embraces the responsibility that comes with the job. "It is really all about preparedness and readiness to go out on a call, whatever the time of day. By being well prepared, following safety procedure and applying rigour and responsibility in all we do at an emergency scene, we can better manage the risk of injury. It's part of the job, though. As they

say, it comes with the territory!", she adds.

However, Kavehunga is quick to point out that when not attending to emergencies, firefighters keep busy performing other work at the fire station. "We sleep, eat, and remain on call, here. There is lots to do. Cleaning and maintaining our fire engines; attending to safety drills and school excursions; and continuously upgrading our skills in anti-arson techniques, disaster preparedness and hazardous materials control", she explains.

A Man's World

Their weaker physiology, coupled with persisting gender and cultural stereotypes, continue to impact on the enrollment of women into the male-dominated firefighting sector. Kavehunga too, recognises that as a woman, she faces an uphill battle competing on equal footing with her male colleagues. "Firefighting is still

a male-dominated job. But, more and more women are entering the field nowadays and are able to live up to expectations. I actually think women make excellent firefighters. We are more caring and demonstrate empathy better than our male counterparts. But, it does also help if you work in a conducive environment like ours, where our male colleagues accept and respect us as full equals”, she shares.

Kavehunga is not the first female firefighter trained and employed at the City of Windhoek Fire Brigade. Others before her have paved the way for young women to take up this career path. And although firefighting was not a childhood ambition, it is a career path she has opted for. She has no regrets about not pursuing a career in marketing. What matters to her is that she can be of service to others. “To learn someone is alive, because of the work that I’ve done is what is the most satisfying and rewarding aspect of being a firefighter. What is equally satisfying is when we interact with schoolchildren and young girls are amazed by the fact that women can also be firefighters. It is really rewarding to know that I am inspiring them”, she says.

Support System

As an emergency professional, Kavehunga’s work is inherently pressure-packed. Not only does she have to deal with the stress of putting out fires or helping in emergencies, she also witness property destruction, deaths and injuries.

In dealing with the stress and pressure, Kavehunga relies on a strong support system that allows her to excel in her work. “I am also a wife and a mother. Balancing such a physically demanding and taxing job with the expectations of motherhood is also not easy. But, I am lucky because I can really draw strength from my husband and two daughters, who inspire me to persevere and work harder. They know that this makes me happy and

as such, they continue to inspire me to do my best and to excel in what I do. Furthermore, it helps when you have colleagues who are ready to support you. We are a strong team and we are always there for each other”, she highlights.

Kavehunga Uakurama. Firefighter. Wife. Mother. A servant of her community; a protector of lives; and a safeguarder of property. Her story teaches us that firefighting is a calling that shouldn’t be limited to a person’s gender. That despite the personal

safety risks, there are many deeply rewarding aspects of this job, which makes it a noble and highly satisfying career. Her story also teaches us that success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing, or learning to do. That success is a journey, not a destination. And when the alarm sounds, she responds, regardless of the weather, or time of day.

She is living her passion.

To learn someone is alive, because of the work that I’ve done is what is the most rewarding aspect of my job as a firefighter.

”



**What does it
take to become
a Firefighter?**



Firefighters control and put out fires, and respond to emergency situations where life, property, or the environment is at risk. Firefighters typically put out fires using water hoses, fire extinguishers, and water pumps. They find and rescue victims in burning buildings or in other emergency situations, treat sick or injured people, prepare written reports on emergency incidents, clean and maintain equipment, conduct drills and physical fitness training, and provide public education on fire safety.

Skills and Knowledge

Requirements vary, but typically prospective firefighters must have a valid driver's license, pass a medical exam and pass drug screening to be hired. After being hired, firefighters may be subject to random drug tests and will also need to complete routine physical fitness assessments. When responding to fire emergencies, firefighters are responsible for connecting hoses to hydrants, operating the pumps that power the hoses, climbing ladders, and using other tools to break through debris. They should be able to interpret building plans. Firefighters' duties may change several times while they are at the scene of an emergency. In some cases they remain at disaster scenes for days, for example, rescuing trapped survivors and

assisting with medical treatment.

Training

Entry-level firefighters typically receive training at fire academies run by fire departments, whose accredited apprenticeship programmes combine technical instruction with on-the-job-training under the supervision of experienced firefighters. Recruits study firefighting and fire-prevention techniques, local building codes, and emergency medical procedures. They also learn how to fight fires with standard equipment, including axes, fire extinguishers, and ladders. They must pass written and physical tests, complete a series of interviews, and hold an emergency medical technician certification. After completion of the course, firefighters must usually complete a probationary period. Advanced training areas include anti-arson techniques, disaster preparedness, hazardous materials control, and public fire safety and education.

Working Conditions

Firefighters have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations. They often encounter dangerous situations, including collapsing floors and walls, traffic accidents, and overexposure to flames and smoke. When on the scenes of fires and other emergencies, the work can be very dangerous. When firefighters aren't putting out fires or responding to other emergencies they spend their time cleaning and

maintaining equipment, learning and developing additional skills related to fire fighting and emergency response, conducting real-life simulations and practice drills, and participating in physical fitness activities.

Being a firefighter is not an easy job. Firefighters routinely face risks, work irregular hours and must respond to calls regardless of the weather. The exact working conditions faced by a firefighter vary; with many working more than 40 hours per week.

Job Prospects

Improved building materials and building codes have resulted in a long-term decrease in fires and fire fatalities, but firefighters will still be needed to respond to fires. Fires can spread rapidly so controlling them quickly is very important. Wildland firefighters will still be needed to combat active fires and manage the environment to reduce the impact of fires. Firefighters will also continue to respond to medical emergencies.

You too can live your passion and become a Firefighter. If you are fit and strong, have strong communication and decisionmaking and can demonstrate courage, you are a good candidate.

- CONTROLLING + PUTTING OUT FIRES
- FINDING + RESCUING VICTIMS
- EMERGENCY SITUATIONS
- PUBLIC FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION

- PHYSICAL STAMINA + STRENGTH
- COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS
- DECISIONMAKING SKILLS
- COURAGEOUS

Firefighting is all about
preparedness to go out on
a call, whatever time of day.

- LONG, VARIED HOURS
- OUTDOORS (ALL-WEATHER)
- FIRE STATION-BASED
- HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT

- PHYSICAL FITNESS
- INTERPRET BUILDING PLANS
- FIRST AID
- PUBLIC SAFETY + EDUCATION

- FIREFIGHTING TECHNIQUES
- WRITTEN + PHYSICAL TESTS
- PROBATIONARY PERIOD
- ADVANCED TRAINING

LIVE YOUR PASSION

05

Job Shatona

Millwright

Working with his hands is in his DNA

There is an unfortunate perception that the technical and vocational education stream is a narrow route and that graduates will find it difficult to land worthwhile employment opportunities. This is just that - perception and not fact.

Meet 32-year old Job Shatona. A qualified millwright whose unique and sought-after skill set makes him a highly employable individual. This is his story.

Strange Occupation

Job was born and raised at Okalongo in Omusati, where he matriculated at Okalongo Secondary in 2002. Growing up, Job realised that he liked working with his hands. It did

therefore not come as a surprise to his family and friends, when Job opted to enroll for a course in Marine Engineering at the Namibia Marine and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI), at Walvis Bay.

It was during his time at NAMFI when he read about millwrighting and where he made the decision to instead enroll at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology, NIMT, at Arandis. "What really attracted me to the trade was its uniqueness. Certainly, where I come from no one knew what a Millwright was. And since I haven't heard of people doing this kind of work, I decided to give it a go. I am qualified now and I continue to like what I am doing", Job explains.





Early Days

Today, Job is employed at the Namibia Ports Authority (Namport) at Walvis Bay. “I studied on a Namdeb scholarship and upon completion in 2008, I went to Oranjemund to seek employment. However, the company was retrenching staff and couldn’t employ me”, he notes.

Job didn’t despair though and he returned to the capital to seek employment. He soon landed an opportunity at Otis Elevators, a company that develops, manufactures and maintains elevators, escalators, and related equipment. “I was never worried, because I knew that qualified millwrights are highly employable. And sure enough, I soon landed a job at Namport in Luderitz and transferred to the Walvis Bay harbour soon thereafter. I’ve been a

Namport employee since”, he adds.

Cutthroat Environment

As a millwright, Job is trained to erect, install, dismantle, repair, and reassemble machinery. This includes such tasks as installing machinery on foundations or base plates and aligning electric motors or other power sources such as turbines with equipment, which millwrights typically connect with some type of coupling. Millwrights are also known as industrial mechanics or machinists. They perform an important function in any industrial plant or setting, because broken down machines can result in serious production losses.

“I am responsible for electrical and mechanical maintenance on the container handling equipment, which entails routine maintenance, servicing of the cranes and inspections. My main duty is to maintain and optimise the availability of the equipment”,

Job explains. “I am an important member of the team. We cannot deliver with broken machinery. If I don’t meet expectations, production suffers. It’s as simple as that”, he highlights.

Technical Work

Amongst others, millwrights must have a good understanding of fluid mechanics, hydraulics and pneumatics, and all of the components involved in these processes, such as valves, cylinders, pumps and compressors.

According to Job, millwrights also need to have a strong mathematical aptitude as they work with a wide array of precision tools, based on quantifiable information. “Although my training at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology really prepared me well to enter the job market, I’ve really learnt a lot and have gained significant work-based experience, since those early

training days. Millwrighting is a very dynamic field. Although the basics will always remain the same, things change fast with new technologies. I make it a point to stay abreast of new developments, because if I don’t, my skill set loses relevance”, Job stresses.

Infectious Passion

Job is a diligent and committed individual who excels in his work. His passion for what he does is clearly demonstrated by his intimate knowledge of the various aspects of his work, and his appreciation for procedures and safety. “Putting together a machine can take a few days or several weeks. As such, one needs to have a good understanding of how the machine works so to repair it when it breaks down. You need to be able to read diagrammes, schematic drawings and service manuals to determine work procedures; operate rigging

equipment; fit bearings; align gears and shafts; attach motors; and connect couplings and belts to precise tolerances”, Job explains.

“You may also do some tack welding to temporarily hold components in place until it can be completely welded by a specialist welder.

Modern standards of practice require working within precise limits or standards of accuracy and at heights without fear. We place a high premium on job safety, but minor injuries such as cuts, bruises, and strains do occur, now and then”, he adds.

Role Model

As a highly skilled artisan, Job is also passionate about vocational education and training, and its potential for empowerment and self-actualisation.

“It is true that most people still think of technical and vocational careers as dirty, low-status, low-paying options. I’ve seen so many young people missing out on golden opportunities in this field, just because someone told them that it is not an option worth pursuing. As such, I am always eager and willing to share my experience with technically-inclined school learners in telling them that technical careers and vocational can indeed be fulfilling and rewarding options, worth pursuing”, he explains. “In fact, I tell them that qualified and experienced millwrights are always in demand, especially in the mining

and manufacturing sectors and as instructors of technical programmes. And the salary is good”, he adds.

Friends and Family

Away from work Job enjoys spending time with his friends. Despite not having a family yet, Job has taken in his nephew, whose grandmother passed away recently. He appreciates that he has to be a good example for the young man, who is currently in Grade 9. “It is quite a responsibility, but I take it as a way of grooming myself to be a mature and responsible man. I know that he looks up to me as a rolemodel and if he chooses to go into a technical field one day, I will be there to support him”, Job explains.

Job didn’t share much about his future plans. For now, he is enjoying his work at Nampot, Walvis Bay, where he has established himself as a key team member and a firm favourite amongst colleagues. “I am happy for now. I am just a down-to-earth, easy going guy who likes people and who laughs a lot. I am just trying to be the best I can be, doing what I love”, he concludes.

Job Shatona. A confident, driven and committed artisan, but also a humble, modest and caring man. His story teaches us that the price of success is hard work and dedication to the job at hand. That we always

need to have faith in ourselves and our unique abilities and talents. That success isn’t always about greatness. It’s about consistency. That it is consistent hard work that leads to success.

He is a trailblazer for technical and vocational training. He is living his passion!

I make it a point to stay abreast of new developments, because if I don’t, my skill set loses relevance.

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**What does it
take to become
a Millwright?**



A millwright is engaged with the erection of machinery, installing dismantling repairing reassembling and moving machinery in factories, power plants, and construction sites. This includes such tasks as installing machinery on foundations or base plates and aligning electric motors or other power sources such as turbines with equipment, which millwrights typically connect with some type of coupling. Millwrights are also known as industrial mechanics or machinists. They read diagrammes, schematic drawings and service manuals to determine work procedures; operate rigging equipment; fit bearings; align gears and shafts; attach motors; and connect couplings and belts to precise tolerances. They repair or replace defective parts and service and repair hydraulic and pneumatic systems. They may also do some tack welding to temporarily hold components in place until it can be completely welded by a specialist welder.

Skills and Knowledge

Requirements vary, but typically prospective millwrights must demonstrate strong planning, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Millwrights must have a good understanding of fluid mechanics, hydraulics and pneumatics, and all of the components involved in these processes, such as valves, cylinders, pumps and compressors. They need to have a strong mathematical aptitude as they work with a wide array of precision tools, such as vernier calipers, micrometers, dial indicators, levels, gauge blocks, and optical and

laser alignment tooling, based on quantifiable information.

Training

Millwrights are highly skilled workers. Putting together a machine can take a few days or several weeks. As such, they need to have a good understanding of how the machine works so that they can repair it when it breaks down. During technical instruction, they are taught mathematics, how to read blueprints, welding, electronics, and pneumatics (using air pressure). Typically, training may also include a focus on shaft alignment, rigging, welding, machining, electrical wiring, steel fabrication, conveyor systems, and steam and gas turbine installation. After being trained in a multitude of different fields, novice millwrights enter in an apprenticeship for “on-the-job” training. There they work alongside all available artisans regardless of trade, depending on the institution. Once they meet a structured quota of experience and pass the necessary tests, they are certified.

Working Conditions

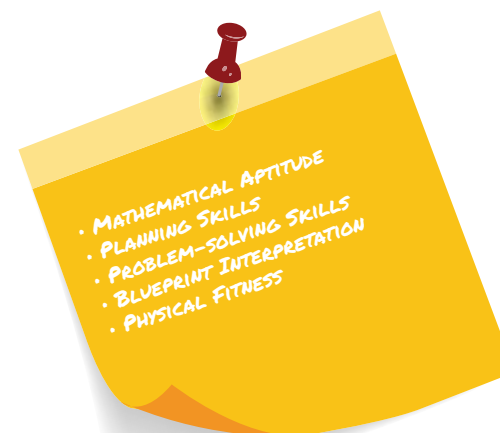
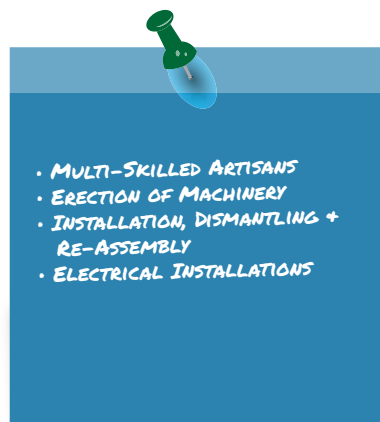
Because of their training and expertise, millwrights are generally chosen to work on tasks associated with flying and setting heavy machinery. When millwrights determine the best place for a machine, they bring the parts to the desired location using forklifts, hoists, winches, cranes, and other equipment. Modern standards of practice for millwrights also require working within precise limits or standards of accuracy and at heights

without fear. Because they work in production facilities and construction sites, minor injuries such as cuts, bruises, and strains are common. Those employed on a contractual basis may spend only a few days or weeks at a single site, and as a result, have variable schedules and may experience downtime between jobs.

Job Prospects

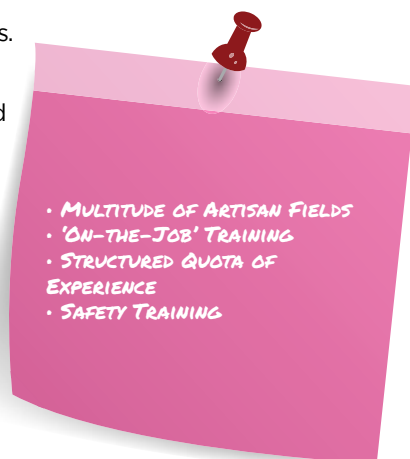
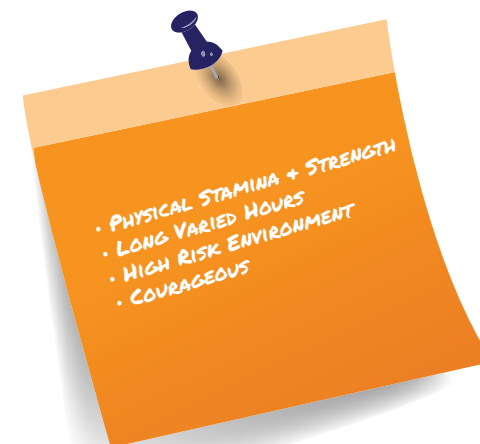
Once certified, millwrights have the opportunity to qualify as technicians, engineers, planners, foremen and many other routes requiring mainly electrical and mechanical expertise. Apprentices are usually paid a percentage of the average millwright wage, and this percentage increases with experience. Many millwrights choose to enter the private sector to work on a contractual basis, especially in the mining and manufacturing sectors. Fields wherein millwrights may operate include low-, medium- and high-voltage electrical faultfinding and installations; Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) installations and maintenance; fitting installation and maintenance of most mechanical, hydraulic and pneumatic systems; and steelworks. Millwrights are also in demand as teachers for vocational and technical programmes.

You too can live your passion and become a Millwright. If you are fit and strong, have strong communication and decisionmaking skills, you are a good candidate.



I've seen so many young people missing out on golden opportunities in this field, just because someone told them that it is not an option worth pursuing.

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LIVE YOUR PASSION

06

Mighty Mwashekele

Chef

Living his Dream in the Culinary World

People who live their passion do what they love. They have found that one thing they love most and made it a career. They don't mind the sacrifices and long hours, because they live and breathe what they do. They pursue that magic despite bad days, early mornings, tough clients, and all other things that would stop others in their tracks.

Meet 28-year old Mighty Mwashekele. A young male chef who is living his passion. This is his story.

City Dweller

Mighty was born at Ondangwa in Oshikoto, but grew up in Windhoek, where he attended school at Namibia English Primary and A Shipena

Secondary. Describing himself as 'just another city boy', Mighty fondly reminisces about his childhood days on the streets of Okuryangava, where he often had to join his brother in selling ice lollies and fatcakes on street corners.

"My childhood wasn't that carefree at all. As siblings, we had to do our part in generating extra income for the family and in helping our parents to make ends meet. At first, I didn't like doing it, but as I grew older, I realised that my parents were actually just teaching us to be responsible and to appreciate the importance of hard work. Nothing in life comes for free after all. You have to work for your success", he says.



Childhood Dream

Mighty's childhood ambition was always that of becoming a chef. So determined was he in pursuing his dream, that he took a deliberate decision in Grade 4, opting for Home Economics as a subject, much to the chagrin of some teachers and school friends. "People thought it a taboo for a boy to take Home Economics, because it was regarded a subject for girls. My classmates teased and mocked me for my selection. But I ignored them, because I knew already then, that my calling was just for the kitchen", he recalls.

After matriculating in 2006, Mighty enrolled at the Wolwedans Desert Academy, located in the Namibrand Nature Reserve in the //Kharas region, where he completed his Level 1 and Level 2 certification. His decision to leave for the deep south was made easier by the fact that a

close friend, John Siloiso, was also stationed there.

"I grew up with John, who today is an established chef himself. He actually entered the culinary industry when I was still at school and kept on inspiring me throughout, to make work of my own dream to become a chef. He was my rolemodel and we remain very close friends to this day", Mighty notes.

World of Work

Mighty returned to the capital to complete his Level 3 certification at a sister institution of the Wolwedans Desert Academy, the Namibia Institute of Culinary Education. Commonly known by its acronym, NICE, the restaurant located in Mozart Street is not only a popular eatery, it also has a dedicated training arm, which specialises in the training of chefs. "I was very fortunate at the time, because my Level 3 training at NICE was sponsored

under a partnership programme of the Namibia Training Authority", he explains.

Nearly all chef graduates start their careers as apprentices to a higher-level chef and work their way up, regardless of education. Upon completing his Level 3 training, NICE took Mighty on board as a trainee chef. It was also at the heavily frequented restaurant, where Mighty was thrown into the deep end.

"It was very tough. But, being familiar with the environment, I was able to cope with the demands. It's all about attitude, I would say. And that attitude tells you that everyone in this industry starts at the bottom rung of the ladder and work their way up", Mighty shares.

Career Success

It takes more to make a great chef than just passion and training. The perfect recipe for success also

includes some intangible personality traits such as stamina, organisation, flexibility, time management and creativity. Attention to detail is important as well, for following recipes and keeping track of cooking supplies, stock levels, and managerial duties are often expected of a restaurant chef.

Today, Mighty is employed by NICE as its Chef de Partie, or station or line chef, always ready as a swing cook to fill in as needed on other stations in the kitchen. “Producing great meals on a commercial scale is a collaborative effort, so every successful chef needs to be a team player. Working late hours is very common as well. As a professional chef you need stamina to keep going for long periods under high pressure. Cooking in a professional setting is different from cooking at home. You’ll work odd hours with long stretches of high demand, and you need stamina to stay focused and productive during that time”, Mighty notes.

Lifelong Learner

Mighty appreciates that all good chefs need to keep up-to-date with what’s happening in their field in learning more about specific cuisines to an expert level. Testing new equipment, trying new ingredients, eating at new restaurants—these learning experiences are part of the joy of being a chef that happens outside the kitchen, but can enrich and improve your performance in it. Chefs are never afraid to go back to the classroom to brush up on old skills, or master new ones.

“Good chefs keep their skill sets relevant and current. I still need to learn new cooking styles and techniques in new and different places. I need to stay abreast of where the culinary world is heading to. I need to

come up with fresh ideas. There is still so much to learn.”, Mighty emphasises. “Hopefully, and in the right time I’ll get there. In fact, one of my dreams is to prepare and serve a local Namibian dish at an international restaurant. What’s wrong with serving kapana or omahangu at a restaurant in New York or Frankfurt. In my book, nothing. It’s all about the preparation and the presentation. We shouldn’t be scared to promote our own”, he adds.

Trailblazer

Someone once said that a dream job requires three things: It must be a good fit for your abilities, match your goals, and make you happy. Being a chef ticks all the boxes for Mighty. “For me, being a chef comes from deep within. I wake up every morning to do this. I enjoy it and I am good at it. Yes, the kitchen can get crazy sometimes, but I am living my passion. I wouldn’t want to be somewhere else, rather than the kitchen. I was born to do this”, he explains.

Mighty also appreciates that he has become a rolemodel for young people. “I ended up here because of the encouragement of my friend and fellow chef, John Soloiso.

Therefore, I also encourage others who are demonstrating the talent and passion for this work, to take it up. Sustained growth in the local tourism and hospitality sector has created a demand for highly skilled

chefs who appreciate that customers want fresh, delicious and attractively presented food. The chefs in highest demand are the ones skilled in a great many areas of preparation. Soon, I will be one of those chefs”, he shares.

Mighty Mwashekele - An ambitious young man with a bright future in the culinary arts. His story teaches us that the happiest employees are the ones who have found careers that match their skills, talents and ambitions. He is truly living his

What’s wrong with serving kapana or omahangu at a restaurant in New York or Frankfurt? It’s all about the presentation. We shouldn’t be scared to promote our own.”



**What does it
take to become
a Chef?**



A chef is someone who is in the profession of preparing, cooking and presenting food. A chef can also be very innovative with food, creating new dishes, deciding what the specials of the day will be, and putting together an exciting menu. Good chefs take what they've learned studying cuisines and recipes in culinary school and apply it in unexpectedly delicious ways. Chefs oversee all of the functions and activities in the kitchen, which includes, all food preparation and of any staff. They make sure the proper seasoning of foods are given and that desserts and other foods are pleasing to the eye and to the palate of the customer. They are also involved in menu planning and pricing and ordering supplies.

Skills and Knowledge

Meeting the requirements to work as a chef depends greatly on the work environment that most interests you. Just as nurses have many different specialties, chefs may also focus in specific areas. Formal training to become a chef typically takes place in a postsecondary institution, but many students begin taking classes in high school followed by on-the-job experience. Educational programs may require students to complete internships or apprenticeships. Some restaurants and hotels offer training and job placement for employees interested in becoming chefs. Skills required to become a professional chef include excellent communication and leadership skills, especially in advanced positions such as executive chef.

The ability to cook well is a major facet of working as a chef but it is necessary to handle the stress of working with multiple recipes simultaneously. Many chefs work very long hours and advanced positions require the ability to keep inventory, order ingredients, evaluate food quality and manage staff members. A chef has to have a sharp mind paired with the ability to work quickly.

Training

A wide variety of formal culinary training exists, ranging from a few months to four years. All programmes have hands-on training, where the students will be in a kitchen and learn cooking and baking techniques, nutrition, preparation, as well as safety and sanitation procedures. Internships may also be required depending on the programme. Nearly all graduates start their careers as an apprentice to a higher-level chef and work their way up, regardless of education. The world of professional cookery offers exciting and challenging job prospects preparing and cooking delicious and nutritious fare in cafés, restaurants, hotels and wineries. If you want to transform your love of food and cooking into a successful career, then this is the place to start.

Working Conditions

This career is a good choice for the very motivated person who enjoys a challenge and an active workplace, day in and day out. Long hours are almost a given for the average chef, and working late hours is very

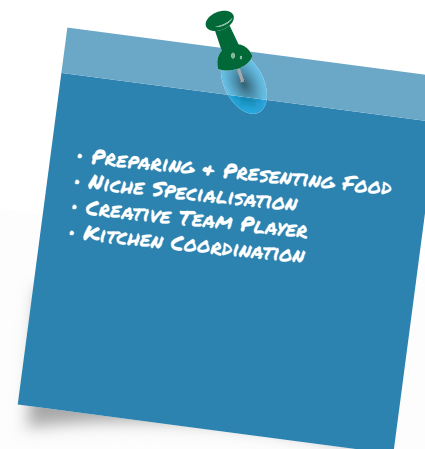
common as well. A great professional chef must be able to withstand the strain and pressure of working in close quarters, standing for hours at a time, lifting heavy kettles and pots and working with hot grills and ovens. Job hazards include falls and slips, cuts and burns, but injuries tend not to be serious. Work hours may include early mornings, late evenings, weekends and holidays. Those who work in factory and school cafeterias may be more regular.

Job Prospects

The chef's workplace can be very diverse, ranging from high-end restaurant and hotel kitchens to private kitchens, hospital kitchens, retirement centres, cruise ships, weddings and other events, or even providing food for movie sets. Sustained growth in the local tourism and hospitality sector has created a demand for highly skilled chefs who appreciate that customers want fresh, delicious and attractively presented food. Most chefs have some specialty or preferred area of work, though it may take time for a chef to settle into a particular niche. Frequently, the chefs in highest demand are the ones skilled in a great many areas of preparation. Many chefs opt to establish their own catering firms to arrange the delivery, preparation and presentation of food for clients at events such as fundraisers, conferences and weddings. Their responsibilities include not only the food and drinks, but the decorations,

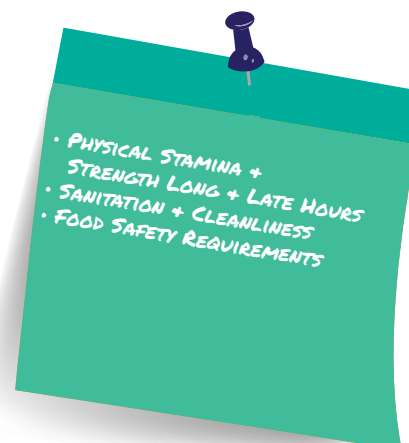
venue, music and lighting. Catering is one of the fastest growing careers in the culinary arts field.

You too can live your passion and become a Chef. If you are driven, creative, a good communicator and have a passion for serving and creating comfort for others, you are a good candidate.



It's all about attitude, I would say. Everyone in this industry starts at the bottom rung of the ladder and work their way up.

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LIVE YOUR PASSION

08

Rosalia Kamati

Sewing Machine Operator

Making Clothes is her Passion

Meet Rosalia Kamati. It wasn't so long ago that Rosalia could barely sew a button, let alone operate a sewing machine. However, a childhood fascination with making clothes has now developed into a bright career path for this 25-year old lady. She is a Sewing Machine Operator. This is her story.

Early Struggles

Rosalia Kamati hails from the Onelewa village outside Ongwediva in Oshana. The youngest of seven children, Rosalia attended primary and secondary school at Ongwediva. Growing up, Rosalia, like many girls of her age, enjoyed playing with her dolls. But, it was no ordinary playing. Rosalia's dolls had to look good and had to wear the latest fashions. So,

she started dressing them up with clothes she made herself from old clothes and fabric. "I got a lot of hidings from my mother and sisters, because I would always be on the lookout for old clothes that I could sew into dolls clothes", she recalls.

However, since her Grade 12 results were not good enough to apply for either university, or technikon, Rosalia found herself sitting idle at home. "After completing Grade 12, I spent one year at home, not knowing what to do with my life. I wasn't in a good space, at all. You see others furthering their studies and landing jobs, whereas I was just sitting at home, idle and unoccupied", she shares.

Changing Fortunes

Luckily, Rosalia learned about a new





intake at the Valombola Vocational Training Centre at Ongwediva and applied. “I was very fortunate. Valombola VTC accepted me as a graduate of the Namibia Training Authority’s Bridging Programme, which was aimed at preparing school leavers for absorption into the technical and vocational stream”, she explains. “This was the best news ever, because it put me in a position to enroll for training in a field I’ve always been passionate about, which is Clothing Production”, she adds.

All of a sudden, Rosalia’s fascination with fashion, which started with her childhood hobby of making clothes for her dolls out of old clothes and fabric offcuts, was taking her on a path to become a qualified Sewing Machine Operator. “I really enjoyed the practical sessions. The attendance registers will confirm that I didn’t miss a single one throughout my training at Valombola VTC. I simply couldn’t get enough. Often,

my fascination would annoy my instructors, because I would always have too many questions about why and how things are done”, she says.

Factory Work

Today, Rosalia is employed by the Dinapama Textile Manufacturing Plant in Windhoek’s Northern Industria. The company specialises in custom designing, manufacturing and branding of high quality clothing items, bags and headwear, and walked away with the Medium Manufacturer of the Year Award at the 2015 Namibia Manufacturer of the Year Awards. “I remember asking our instructor at Valombola VTC to arrange excursions to local manufacturing companies. It was during one such a visit to the Dinapama plant that we were introduced to the Managing Director, Mr. David Namalenga, who encouraged us to complete our training and to then approach him

for employment. I kept him to his promise, and shortly after graduation, I became a Dinapama employee”, Rosalia shares.

Rosalia’s work as a Sewing Machine Operator at Dinapama involves assembling garments by matching patterns and dye lots and joining sections into finished products on a production basis. The field requires physical dexterity and a close eye for detail, and patience is a virtue for any operator. “This work requires heaps of concentration. It’s not about just sewing things together. You must be able to visualise a three-dimensional garment as it takes shape from a pile of flat fabric pieces. You must also be well-organised, so pattern pieces don’t get damaged or lost”, she shares.

Value Addition

Rosalia feels very strong about local value addition and support to

local manufacturers and laments what she describes as a pre-conceived negativity towards locally-manufactured products. “As Namibians, we think quality can only come from outside our borders. You can also find good quality here at home. Look at Dinapama, manufacturing top-notch quality, but still you’ll find corporates procuring the same items from South Africa. How do we expect our economy to grow, if we don’t support our local companies? It’s simple really, if we spend our money here, we keep our money here”, she explains.

“It’s all about mindsets. The use of traditional textiles for fashion is becoming big business in Africa, and Namibia shouldn’t be the exception. We should emulate other countries

and be proud to wear our own Namibian designs. Look at my shirt. It's a Namibian product, made in Namibia, by Namibians working at a Namibian factory, Dinapama", she adds.

Passion for Fashion

Rosalia's passion for her work goes far beyond the clothes she makes. For her, it's a lifestyle, an emotional connection, and a love that goes far deeper than material, needles and thread.

"For me, fashion is what I see on the streets. I love going to the open market just observing what people are wearing, what the latest trends are and what they are buying. I also try to link up with other tailors and needleworkers. This is how I met Meme Lahya, who owns a tailoring stand at the Ongwediva Open Market. She has taught me a few things, especially about traditional needlework techniques. We remain good friends", she notes.

Circumstances are making it difficult for Rosalia to live her passion. She currently stays with her sister at the 'One Nation' settlement on the outskirts of Katutura, where there is no electricity. But, she is already applying her skills in her free time to supplement her income and

to save towards her first sewing machine. "I'm not sewing now. However, my sister introduced me to another lady who I am helping in cutting fabric, because she only has one machine. She calls me whenever she needs assistance", she explains.

Future Entrepreneur

As one of Dinapama's star employees, Rosalia continues to make the best of opportunities that come her way. But, she remains resolute in making her dream to one day managing her own outlet a reality. "I am saving up for the machinery like the straight and overlock machines just to get me off the ground. I will need to reinvest the profits into more advanced machinery and build the business gradually until I can acquire my own premises from which to operate. It's not going to be easy, I know. But watch this space!", she shares.

Rosalia's dream to one day employ herself encapsulates a key objective of technical and vocational training – To empower graduates with skills

they in turn can apply to create employment for themselves and others. "I think more technical and vocational graduates should aspire towards becoming self-employed. That is what is beautiful about technical and vocational training. You can use your skill set to become a job creator, and not a job seeker", she emphasises.

Rosalia Kamati. Young, gritty, driven, creative, humble. Her unwavering spirit encourages us to work hard, and never give up on our dreams, even when nobody else believes they can come true. Her story gives us hope that the future of Namibia can be secured with skilled young people able to build the economy and create a sustainable future for the generations to come. She is living her passion!

Often, my fascination would annoy my instructors at Valombola VTC, because I would always have too many questions.

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**What does it
take to become a
Sewing Machine
Operator?**



A sewing machine operator is a textile worker who sews fabric with an electronic sewing machine. A sewing machine operator threads the machine, which is a very intricate process on many machine models, adjusts the tension settings based on the type of thread being used, selects stitch settings and then gets down to sewing. Depending on the type of job, they assemble pieces of garments by matching patterns and dye lots and joining sections of garments or other articles into finished products on a piecework, or production basis. Some sewing machine operators do their work on machines identical or similar to those commonly used in domestic sewing projects. Others use larger, more powerful machines that are faster and able to handle thicker fabrics easily. Sewing machine operators operate, inspect, and repair sewing machines.

Skills and Knowledge

The field requires physical dexterity and a close eye for detail. Experience is the most valuable asset for a sewing machine operator. There is no substitute for it; even those who hold degrees in fashion design won't be able to sew well without practice and repetition. Good eyesight and small, thin fingers are ideal; those with larger, thicker fingers must exercise extra caution so that they don't get caught by the sewing needle. Patience is a virtue for a sewing machine operator; these professionals must also be able

to visualise a three-dimensional garment as it takes shape from a pile of flat pieces of fabric. Operators must be well-organised so pattern pieces don't get damaged or lost. Critical thinking skills are also helpful for determining alternative methods of production and increasing output.

Training

Sewing Machine Operator training includes both theoretical classes and practical classes and lots of practice on sewing machines. Key competencies trainees have to master include stitching and sewing fabrics and synthetic materials; work accurately with the sewing machines; perform handwork; identify quality defects; and perform improvements to avoid defects. Typically, training courses cover aspects such as threading, cutting, machine control, and garment design. After completion of training, trainees are expected to operate a sewing machine on their own in sewing garments. Many textile factories offer in-house 'on-the-job' training.

Working Conditions

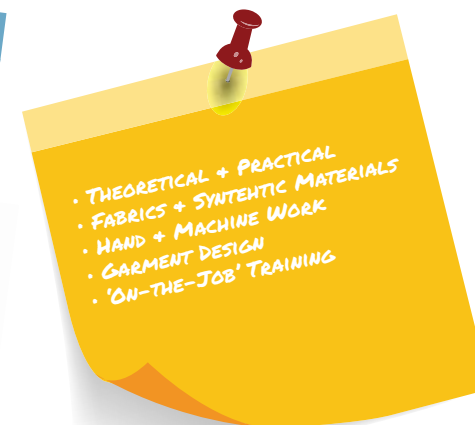
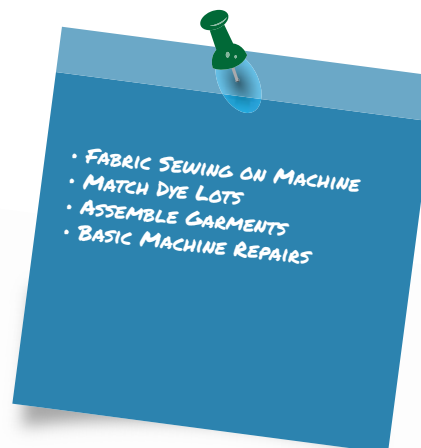
Sewing machine operators who work for large clothing manufacturers often work in a huge warehouse environment, where the focus is on churning out garments as quickly as possible. Many sewing machine operators work in cramped conditions, hunched over their machine for hours at a time.

Good health and a strong back are helpful; those who need a bit of extra help in this area may be most comfortable in a lumbar support chair, which reduces pressure on the tailbone and lower spine. Sewing machines generate moderate noise, so conversation is impractical when they are running. Sewing machine operators must therefore be comfortable working in solitude; even if there is another person working close by.

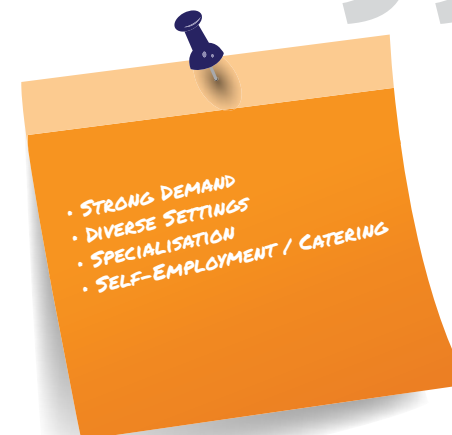
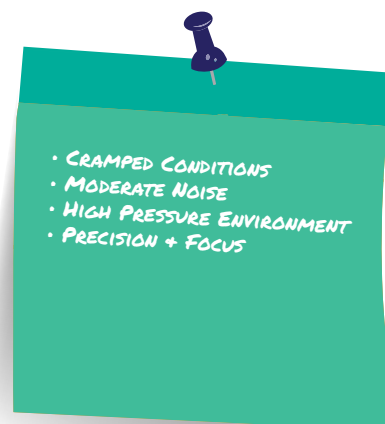
Job Prospects

Most sewing machine operators work in the garment industry, although tough industrial sewing machines are also used to make boat sails, curtains and upholstery. Although many fashion couture companies employ hand sewers to do delicate beading and embroidery, most continue to keep a legion of sewing machine operators on their payroll because using the machine speeds things up dramatically. Some operators opt to work as private service providers, specialising in garment alterations and in the manufacturing of specific gowns and garments for weddings, fancy-dress parties and costumes. Others specialise in costumes for athletes that must be durable, comfortable, have an attractive appearance, and must also not interfere with the athlete's movements. Many factories categorise sewing operators, based on skill and experience.

You too can live your passion and become a Sewing Machine Operator. If you are creative, enjoy working with fabric and have a passion to make others look good, you are a good candidate.



That is what is beautiful about technical and vocational training. You can use your skill set to become a job creator, and not a job seeker.



LIVE YOUR PASSION

07

Marthin Shikongo

Auto Mechanic

From Wire Car Builder to Qualified Auto Mechanic

Cars are important machines for modern society, but to some people, they are moving wonders that hold compelling mysteries, waiting to be solved. Meet 26 year-old Marthin Shikongo, a young man who has turned his boyhood passion for cars into a rewarding and fulfilling career. He is an Auto Mechanic. This is his story.

Village Boy

Marthin grew up at Ondonga village in the Olukonda Constituency in Oshikoto. After completing his Grade 10 at the Ontananga Junior Secondary School, he proceeded to the Ekulo Senior Secondary School where he completed Grade 12 in 2008.

He vividly recalls his carefree village life and the fun he had with friends driving their wire cars around, pretending they were the latest models. "Village life was all about having fun, and fun was having a wire car. It wasn't easy to make them, because my dad didn't want me to use his pliers. He caught me with the pliers a few times and I would get a thorough hiding", he recalls.

Marthin is convinced that his early fascination with wire cars and his tendency to disassemble things, is what prepared him for a career in Auto mechanics in later life. "I've always enjoyed taking things apart to see how they work. I'd take apart anything I could get my hands on. As I grew older, I gained more skill in the art of disassembly, and it wasn't long before I didn't have anything left to dismantle. Worse yet, I didn't have





any toys to play with”, he shares.

Disciplined Training

Our Auto mechanic passed Grade 12 with excellent grades, good enough to secure entry to technikon, or university. However, despite encouragement from some family members and friends to pursue tertiary studies, Martin remained resolute in following his boyhood dream to become an Auto mechanic. He eventually ended up registering at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT). “There wasn’t really anything of interest at either university or technikon. After a lot of introspection, I realised that my desire to work with my hands was just too strong. And when I found out that NIMT offered an Auto mechanic course at its Arandis campus, I applied, and was accepted”, Marthin explains.

Marthin excelled in the theoretical campus-bound sessions, but found the going tough during his first job attachment at Busy Trucks at Ondangwa. “Sometimes, I felt like just giving up. My foreman would send me for a tool I couldn’t identify. When I took too long he would say that I do not know what I am doing”, he recalls. A strong fighting spirit kept him from giving up. “I soon settled in and my foreman soon changed his stance. The compliments started rolling in. I improved on finishing tasks ahead of schedule. I organised the tools and lubricants and I kept the quality of my work up to standard. My foreman taught me the importance of keeping my tools clean, after working on a car. That is housekeeping. When your tools are clean, then your job is also clean”, he shares.

Fulfilling Work

Further attachment opportunities followed at Rhino Trucks and Repair in the capital, where Marthin was afforded the opportunity to work under supervision on smaller passenger vehicles. Soon after graduation in 2012, he landed a job as an Automechanic at Reho Auto Repairs, at Rehoboth. “It was my first time to work without a foreman’s supervision and it was very exciting. Working independently made me realise that I made the right career decision. Fixing a car and making it work, is so self-fulfilling. It’s what makes me happy”, he notes.

Today, Marthin is employed by prominent local tourism company, Wilderness Safaris, in its automechanics workshop. Colleagues consider him an asset to the company and value the important work he does in ensuring that operations run smoothly. “The

company relies on its about 100 vehicles to conduct countrywide tours and has a fully-fledged workshop to service and repair its fleet. Often, it’s required that we visit lodges where we do emergency repairs, but most of the time, I work from here where I fix engines, gearboxes, differentials, brake and suspension systems and clutches. We also do our own fabrication and we have our own team of Panelbeaters and Electricians”, he explains.

Big Dreams

Proud of his steady progress at Wilderness Safaris, and how he is appreciated by his supervisors as a key member of the team, Marthin appreciates that he still needs to grow and gain more experience. “Some people choose to start into the automotive industry by jumping in with no schooling and only on-the-job training. Those that do are at a

disadvantage these days. Computers and electronics in today's vehicles require mechanics to diagnose and repair these complex non-mechanical systems, as well as perform the work of a mechanic. A lack of education in these areas can therefore be very detrimental. That is why I chose to seek out training, from the onset", he emphasises.

Marthin is not only a skilled Automechanic, this young man also harbours a dream to one day take the lead in assembling a team of skilled artisans to produce a locally-made Namibian automobile. "I don't think it is far-fetched at all. Yes, it will require significant capital investment, but we have the skills here. We have Fitters and Turners, Boilermakers, Diesel Mechanics and Auto-Electricians. We can manufacture a car in Namibia. It is my dream and I am going to make it happen. All I need is the funds and a strong team", Marthin shares.

Support System

For now, Martin remains focused on doing his best. And, he enjoys the full support of his family, employer and friends. They recognise him as an individual who takes pride in his work, and as someone who is passionate about what he does.

"My family has been very supportive. They appreciate that this is what makes me happy. They have my back, at all times. And I have theirs, because I am now the family mechanic. Whenever their vehicles

have problems, I'm their man to fix them", he shares. "I am encouraged, not only by their support, but my the support from my employer, as well. Them giving me work to do is a sign that they have trust in my skills and ability. It is very reassuring", he adds.

Skills Champion

Marthin is passionate about technical and vocational training and embraces the fact that he is a rolemodel for his peers, and others, wishing to enter the stream. "I'm not bragging, but I'm doing well. I can support myself and I am on a solid career track with a bright future ahead of me. Those who continue to think that there is no future in technical and vocational careers should reconsider their stance. Technical and vocational options are the future", he says.

Fixing a car and making
it work, is so self-fulfilling.
It's what makes my happy





**What does it
take to become an
Auto Mechanic?**



Auto mechanics are professionals that repair and maintain motor vehicles of all types. An automechanic may choose to provide general repair services or specialise in a system, such as engines or transmissions. Some automechanics work on a specific type of vehicle. Those who work for dealerships almost always have training on that particular brand of vehicle. In smaller businesses, their duties may include a full range of repair and maintenance services. In larger businesses, they may specialise in certain areas, such as brakes, transmissions or air conditioning systems.

Skills and Knowledge

The type of work auto mechanics do has changed significantly over the years. They must now be skilled in working on electronic systems and in addition to strong mechanical skills, have good computer skills to be able to use computer systems to diagnose and analyze the performance of a modern vehicle. The tools of the trade, such as power and hand tools, also require physical strength and hand dexterity. Many tasks, such as disassembling engine parts, connecting or attaching components, and using hand tools, require a steady hand and good hand-eye coordination. Since automotive businesses depend on repeat clients, auto mechanics must be good listeners and ready to answer customers' questions. Other essential skills include reading, document use, numeracy and critical thinking.

Training

Because, automotive technology is becoming increasingly sophisticated, many employers prefer service technicians who have completed a formal training programme at a recognised institution, especially for entry-level positions. New workers generally start as trainee mechanics or lubrication workers and gradually acquire and practice their skills by working with experienced mechanics and technicians.

Working Conditions

Auto mechanics work in workshops on traditional mechanical components, such as engines, transmissions, belts, and hoses. However, they must also be familiar with a growing number of electronic systems. Braking, transmission and steering systems, for example, are controlled primarily by computers and electronic components. Other integrated electronic systems, such as accident-avoidance sensors, are becoming common as well. In addition, a growing number of technicians are required to work on vehicles that run on alternative fuels, such as ethanol and electricity. After computer diagnostics, automotive repair work is likely to require handling greasy parts and tools. Most shops are clean and well lit, but a repair task may put the technician in uncomfortable positions as parts are removed and replaced.

Job Prospects

Most auto mechanics work fulltime for private companies, while others are self-employed. In related careers, automechanics may also work as diesel and heavy vehicle service technicians, while others may pursue careers in automotive body and glass repairs. Other options include repairing the smaller engines in motorcycles or boats.

You too can live your passion and become an automechanic. If you are a fit and strong and have strong mechanical skills, you are a good candidate.

We can manufacture a car in Namibia.
It is my dream and I am going to make
it happen.

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LIVE YOUR PASSION

09

Trevor Nikanor

Deck Officer

Making A Good Living at Sea

Rendering support in the navigation, manoeuvring and safe handling of the ship; communications between ship and shore; the handling of cargo; and the operation of all lifesaving devices, the role of a Deck Officer is vital on board a seagoing vessel. Meet 37-year old Trevor Nikanor, who started his career as a Deck Officer and today is a seasoned and experienced Skipper. This is his story.

Harbour Boy

Trevor hails from the harbour town of Walvis Bay, where his single mother raised him and two siblings. He attended school at Tamariskia Primary at Swakopmund, from where he went on to the SOS Herman Gmeiner Technical High

School at the coastal town, excelling in Diesel Mechanics as a subject.

His mother, a businesswoman trading in the informal sector, taught Trevor and his siblings from an early age that success come with hard work and dedication. Financial constraints, however, prevented Trevor from enrolling for tertiary studies upon completing Grade 12. When his girlfriend also fell pregnant at the time, his aunt stepped in and enrolled Trevor at the Namibia Marine and Fisheries Institute (NAMFI) at Walvis Bay. "I was to become a father that year and my aunt felt that I had to secure a future for myself and be able to take care of my child. It was a relatively easy decision. I grew up at Walvis Bay and knew many people who worked at sea and earned good money", he explains.





Exciting Training

Confronted with a choice to either become a Deck Officer or an Engineering Officer, Trevor opted for the former. He took to this training at NAMFI like a fish to water. "I didn't really understand the difference between the two, but today I can safely say that I made the right choice. I excelled in the Natutical Science training, which consists of three main elements namely, navigation and ship handling, safe operation of a ship, and handling cargo from the onset. I just had a 'natural feel' for the field. It was a match made in heaven", he recalls.

Deck Officer graduates start off as cadets and on completing requisite sea-time and examination, go on to become a third officer, then a second officer, a chief officer, and then captain. Trevor has worked his way up through the ranks. Hangana Seafood, a subsidiary of the Ohlthaver & List Group has employed him as a Skipper on its wet fish stern trawlers. "I started at the bottom, working for about

thirty-six bigger and smaller vessels in Namibian and international waters. But, here I am today. A master of a vessel for the past ten years", he shares.

Profit & Competition

As a fully Namibian-owned company and one of the leading employers in the Namibian hake fishing industry, Hangana operates its own wetfish fleet. Catches are preserved on ice and transported to the company's harbour-based factories for further processing.

Trevor makes up an important part of this value chain. He is under constant pressure to ensure that the catches he brings in meet production targets and deadlines. "Our work is volume -driven. Bottom line is that if you return to the harbour empty-handed, production and profit margins are compromised. There is a lot of pressure on me to make sure we meet our targets", he notes.

"Our salaries are determined by the gouta volumes we bring in. The competition between the six vessels in the Hangana fleet is strong, but healthy, in an environment of sustainable fishing to ensure we don't deplete our resources. I'm very competitive and I've been a top performer for Hangana", he adds.

Demanding Work

Sustained growth in the local fisheries, logistics and marine mining sectors is creating more and more employment opportunities for Deck Officers. They are vital members of a ship's management team – responsible for making decisions on steering the ship, controlling navigation and communications.

Deck Officers also assume responsibility for the safety of the vessel and the crew. It is responsible work that requires meticulous planning. "I need to ensure that all safety equipment is

secured and that mechanical and technical hiccups are solved, before we sail. Our success depends ultimately on the quality of our planning. I am also responsible for the wellbeing of my crew whilst at sea. So it's important to be decisive, calm and someone who inspires confidence in others", Trevor says.

Treacherous Environment

Working at sea is treacherous. As the master of the ship, Trevor places a high premium on safety and emergency preparedness. "I need to lead by example, because the master is always the last person on board. The sea is dangerous. You need to be fearless as this is not work for a mommy's boy. We never compromise on safety and every five years, we are required to attend refresher safety training courses", he explains.

Trevor has experienced the sea's peril first-hand. He lost a close friend when the Namibian-registered fishing vessel, the Meob Bay, sank in 2005. "The sea was very rough and the boat caught the mooring rope of an anchor. My friend and the crew were caught in the vessel when it capsized. I was on another vessel a few miles away, but we couldn't do anything, because the sea was too rough", he recalls.

In spite of the perilous environment, Trevor remains a firm believer in the potential of working on sea and the opportunities on offer for young Namibians wishing to enter the fray. "I always encourage young people to join the marine sector. We need more Namibians skilled in this work to allow us to take charge of our marine resources and to Namibianise this sector. The job pays well and you get to travel to other countries. I can speak six languages, including Russian and Ukrainian, because I travelled there often", he notes.

Support System

Spending long periods on sea can be physically and psychologically taxing. When on land, Trevor makes sure to make time for his loved ones. "I must admit that being at sea for long periods can get to you

sometimes. My family is my support system and that's why I prioritise spending quality time with them, whenever I'm on land" he stresses.

When not at sea, Trevor also takes care of his private business ventures. "The financial security that comes with my job has also allowed me to invest my savings in a few private ventures, which are starting to pay off. I'm doing well", he notes.

He is also planning to further his studies in Marine Engineering. "I am a very driven and focused individual always on the lookout for opportunities to grow further and learn more. This is just who I am", he concludes.

Trevor Nikanor. Deck Officer, Businessman and Father. His passion for his work and his commitment to his team helps him in dealing with the stress and pressure of a treacherous work environment. He carries on his duties and responsibilities with fortitude and endurance. His story teaches us that it is the strong that survive, but the courageous that triumph. He is a Deck Officer. He is living his passion. And so can you!

The sea is dangerous.
You need to be fearless.
This is not work for a
mommy's boy.

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**What does it
take to become a
Deck Officer?**



Responsible for rendering support in the navigation, manoeuvring and safe handling of the ship; communications between ship and shore; the handling and delivery of cargo; and the operation of all lifesaving devices, the role of a Deck Officer is vital on board a seagoing vessel. Graduates start off as cadets and on completing requisite sea-time and examination, go on to become a third officer, then a second officer, a chief officer, and then captain.

Skills and Knowledge

Candidates wishing to follow the path of Deck Officer training must have a Grade 12 certificate with good grades in English, Mathematics and Science. They would also be required to undergo a medical and an eyesight test. A Deck Officer is a vital member of the ship's management team – responsible for making decisions on steering the ship, controlling navigation and communications. So it's important to be a good team player, decisive, calm and someone who inspires confidence in others. You'll be interested in technology and have good mathematical, written and verbal skills. Overall – confidence, enthusiasm and self-reliance are essential.

Training

To become a Deck Officer, you have to study Nautical Science. It consists of three main elements, namely, navigation and ship handling, safe operation of a ship, and handling cargo. Subjects covered at different levels include Navigation and Systems; Ship Stability and Naval Architecture;; Maritime Law; Maritime Distress and Safety Systems; and Engine Theory. Other requirements include mandatory safety courses and compulsory sea-time onboard vessels, according to Namibian Manning Regulations. Courses leading to qualification are approved by the Directorate of Maritime Affairs and are offered by the Namibian Fisheries and Maritime Institute, in line with the International Maritime Organisation's Conventions on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers.

Working Conditions

Deck Officers may work on deck, below deck or on the bridge of a range of different ships. Your day-to-day tasks will vary depending on your rank. At an

entry level, you'll deal with safety equipment and lifeboats and carry out watch duties. Other tasks that come with seetime, experience and promotion include navigation, using radar and satellite systems, deck operations and maintenance, cargo handling and storage. You'll work shifts, known as watches, that vary according to the size of ship. On a large ship, you'll usually work four hours on duty, and eight hours off. Your time at sea could vary from a few days to several months. Periods of leave also vary.

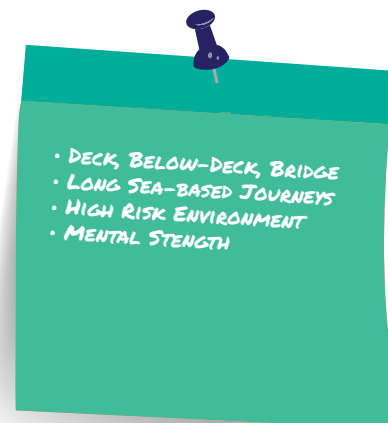
Job Prospects

Sustained growth in the local fisheries, logistics and marine mining sectors is creating more and more employment opportunities for Deck Officers. Onshore, experienced Deck Officers can also land jobs in the management department of shipping companies. However it is advisable to sail for a few years and amass experience before shifting to onshore jobs.

You too can live your passion and become a Deck Officer. If you are a team player and have strong mathematical aptitude, you are a good candidate.



We need more Namibians skilled in this work to allow us to take charge of our marine resources and to Namibianise this sector.





LIVE YOUR PASSION

10

Tangeni Nghiwewelekwa

Plumber

Plumbers install and repair water supply lines, waste disposal systems, and related appliances and fixtures to keep homes and businesses flowing smoothly. Plumbing is a challenging, but rewarding career, best suited to people who are motivated, hardworking and patient.

Meet 42-year old Tangeni Nghiwewelekwa. A qualified plumber and owner of the thriving Ongwediva-based company, Water Engineering Africa. This is his story.

Early Years

Tangeni Nghiwewelekwa was born at Engela in Ohangwena. In 1979, his father, Heita Nghiwewelekwa, a school principal by then, went into exile to join the liberation struggle. Tangeni's mother, Ndapewa Nghiwewelekwa, a trained nurse, decided in 1987 to take her children

and join her husband in exile. In 1988, Tangeni was selected to go and study in Germany where he was trained as a Pipe Construction Technician at Chemie AG in Halle, Germany. In 1991, he came back to Namibia and took up employment at the TCL Mine at Tsumeb.

However, after a year, he decided to enroll at the Valombola Vocational Training Centre at Ongwediva, where he obtained a Vocational Trade Diploma in Plumbing and Pipefitting in 1998. "As a child I never considered becoming a plumber, but after I participated in a short plumbing training course whilst at TCL, I saw an opportunity for reliable plumbing services in the market. I discussed it with my father who advised me to take up vocational training to sharpen my skills. That's how I ended up at Valombola VTC", Tangeni shares.



Quality Training

Tangeni immediately took to his training and enjoyed job attachment stints at a number of employers, including Oshikango Garage, Oshakati Town Council and the Ministry of Works and Transport. "The theoretical and practical training I received at Valombola VTC was much more detailed than what I was exposed to in Germany. I'm a firm believer in learning whilst doing. So it shouldn't come as a surprise when I tell you that I always looked forward to and thoroughly enjoyed all the job attachments at a wide array of companies, throughout my training years. I was like a sponge – absorbing everything about my chosen occupation", Tangeni recalls.

It was in his final year and during a job attachment at the Namibia-Malaysia Construction Company, where Tangeni's supervisor

approached him with an offer he simply couldn't refuse, even though he was still just a trainee. The company was constructing houses at Oluno and Ondangwa, and Tangeni was asked to take on the role of a sub-contractor to install the plumbing and drainage systems for five houses. "Although I hadn't done it before and had no tools and equipment, let alone a bank account for that matter, I couldn't say no. I organised a few fellow trainees to join me and we were awarded an additional thirty houses to complete, because our work met all technical requirements", he recalls.

Humble Beginnings

After graduating, Tangeni started working as a Handyman at the Eenhana Town Council. Again, it was his commitment and diligence that paid off and six months later, he was promoted to the position of an Artisan. "My parents taught me to work hard and to demonstrate initiative. I soon joined the Oshakati

Town Council as an Artisan and after three years, I was once again promoted to the position of Foreman – Wet Services, where my responsibility was to ensure that the water and sewer reticulation system in the town was well maintained in order to avoid service disruptions", he explains.

"As a Foreman, I introduced a wide range of preventative measures and mechanisms that culminated into a Wet Services Master Plan for the Oshakati Town Council, which became a blueprint for the Town Council in making informed decisions in the planning of new extensions", Tangeni adds.

Later, ELWIWA, a Windhoek-based company specialising in the distribution and installation of pump systems opened shop in northern Namibia, and was looking for a dynamic and experienced Project Manager to market its services to local and regional authorities. Tangeni came highly recommended and landed the job. "ELWIWA

appreciated my experience as I've worked alongside mechanical, civil and structural engineering firms and enjoyed valuable exposure to major local and regional authority development projects", he explains.

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Tangeni played a pivotal role in the establishment of ELWIWA's northern branch, overseeing the construction of various multi-million dollar water reticulation projects. Although he was now an established Project Manager, he couldn't forget his first sub-contracting experience.

Recognising the need for localised plumbing and pipefitting service provision to the northern municipalities, he took a leap of faith and established his own company, Water Engineering Africa, with the support of his wife and parents. "My dad signed for my first performance guarantee. Those

initial years were challenging and we often had to rely on my wife, who kept her full-time job, to keep us afloat”, Tangeni recalls. “We converted our garage into office space and landed our first big tender to service fifty erven for the Helao Nafidi Town Council. Another project followed at Ondangwa and soon we were on a path of steady growth”, he adds.

Family Business

Today, Water Engineering Africa offers expert service to commercial and domestic customers. It has over the years participated in a number of multi-million dollar projects. More interestingly, 81 out of its 180 employees are women, mainly from the previously disadvantaged group.

Tangeni’s wife of 13 years, Elizabeth, is Water Engineering Africa’s Finance and Administration Executive. As the Managing Director, Tangeni carries a lot of responsibility to ensure that the business keeps afloat. “I need to ensure that the business is going in the right direction, negotiating with clients for new projects and with suppliers on better prices. I identify new markets and ensure our offer is best in terms of both price and quality” he notes.

As a budding entrepreneur, Tangeni not only has big plans for Water Engineering Africa; he has also ventured into the construction and ground stabilisation sectors.

“We have two other companies, focusing on the renewable energy and low-cost housing sectors, respectively. We’ve also acquired an international ground stabilisation technology franchise which was developed in Finland”, he says.

Career Ambassador

Tangeni is a firm believer in the potential of technical and vocational training and does his utmost in encouraging young people, especially the trainee interns he frequently takes in on attachment, to follow their dreams. “I encourage young people to take up Plumbing and other trades to employ themselves and create jobs for others. Technical skills put you in a position where you don’t have to wait on handouts from government. You can employ yourself. The opportunities are out there. But, you must be willing to start at the bottom. Enroll and qualify at a vocational training institution, be willing to learn and work hard”, he concludes.

Managing a multi-million dollar business of this magnitude is taxing and demanding. When not engaged in exploring new projects and business ventures, Tangeni enjoys spending time with his family - wife Elizabeth and children, Ndalila, Heita and Tutunga. He is also a keen gardener.

Tangeni Nghiweweekwa - Plumber, Entrepreneur, Employer and Father. His story teaches us that opportunity favours the bold. That opportunities are there to be seized and that when it comes knocking, we should embrace it, and not allow our fears to hold us back. He is a Plumber. He is living his

I enjoyed the job attachments throughout my training years. I was like a sponge – absorbing everything about my chosen occupation.





**What does it
take to become a
Plumber?**



Anyone who has faced a busted pipe or broken toilet will tell you that plumbers are heroes. Plumbers install and repair water supply lines, waste disposal systems, and related appliances and fixtures to keep homes and businesses flowing smoothly. Plumbers can be involved in hands-on work or may work in a design capacity, drafting blueprints and helping make the installation process more efficient. Testing pipes for leakage using air pressure and other gauges, and also the ability to construct new pipe systems by cutting, fitting, measuring and threading pipes are some of the other more involved aspects of plumbing. Plumbers often work right alongside architects as they can contribute valuable knowledge about the best positions for wall passage and fixture locations, saving the architect valuable time and avoiding expensive mistakes.

Skills and Knowledge

Plumbing is a challenging career, best suited to people who are motivated, hardworking and patient. Good customer service skills and an outgoing personality are also important assets for a residential professional that needs the trust and return business of his or her clients. Odd and long hours, weekends, and holidays spent working are almost a given in many if not most plumbing jobs. Mathematical and spatial aptitude is also a valuable asset for someone considering this as a possible

career.

Training

Completing a plumbing course at a technical training centre, followed by an apprenticeship is probably the most common route to becoming a licensed plumbing professional. The length of time it takes to begin a new career in plumbing is difficult to define because every case is different, but a career arc of four to six years from beginning training to working as full-fledged plumber would be typical. However, this occupation tends to be one where the learning doesn't really ever end, and experienced plumbers that have been in the field for twenty years will learn new methods and aspects of the trade, as the need arises.

Working Conditions

Being a plumber is physically demanding. Strength, stamina, and an ability to work in a variety of environments are all assets you'll need before you decide to pick up a pipe wrench. Things can get dirty, as you might spend a cold morning wedged in a frigid crawl space fixing a broken drainage line. It all needs to get done, and there is some serious compensation available for those who are willing and able to do it. Simply put, anywhere that has or needs to have running water is an opportunity for potential customers. Even motor vehicles such as buses, recreational

vehicles, large airplanes, yachts, and cruise ships all need the installation of plumbing and will need repair work from time to time.

Job Prospects

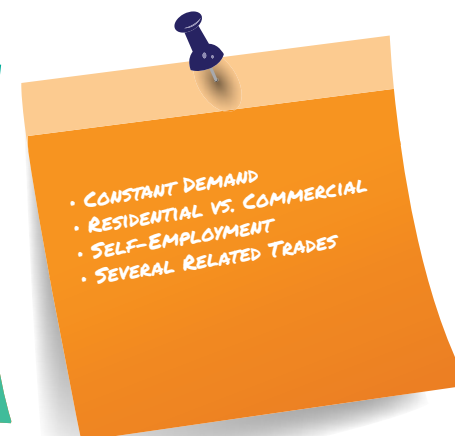
Unless it's for scheduled maintenance or installation, people who need plumbers usually need them right away. The good news is that urgency makes for excellent job security. The bad news is you might work late hours and be on call for nights and weekends. A typical day might include fielding midnight phone calls from a frantic homeowner with a broken pipe, or working for an architectural firm or on a construction site. Many experienced plumbers choose to go into business for themselves; while others become contractors. Related options with less potential for late hours, include pipelaying, pipefitting, sprinklerfitting and steamfitting. These jobs require similar skills, but frequently offer more regularly scheduled hours.

You too can live your passion and become a Plumber. If you are a team player and have strong mathematical aptitude, you are a good candidate.



Technical skills put you in a position where you don't have to wait on handouts from government. You can employ yourself.

”



LIVE YOUR PASSION

11

Chrisjan Apollus

TV Producer

A Television Producer is responsible for a TV show's overall quality and ensures that all production activities stay on schedule. From inception to completion, they create, organise and support the shooting of a television project.

Meet 35-year old Chrisjan Apollus, a seasoned TV Producer, employed by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. Chrisjan has overcome many obstacles in living his passion. This is his story.

Challenging Childhood

Chrisjan Apollus is a Katutura boy, born and bred.

A product of the A. Shipena High School where he completed Grade 12, Chrisjan's teenage years were not easy. Convinced that his late stepfather did not like him, he started to isolate himself from his

family.

However, in his search for acceptance, he ended up with the wrong crowd. Not knowing how to deal with the peer pressure, Chrisjan got involved in petty crimes, in and around the neighbourhood.

"I was somehow convinced that my friends understood me better. Instead, they pressured me into doing 'naughty' things and I eventually ended up in front of a Magistrate, facing jailtime. It all changed when I walked into the courtroom and saw my mother with tears in her eyes. And I thought to myself, this should never happen again", he recalls.

A New Page

Turning his life around wasn't easy, but Chrisjan's faith pulled him through. He also realised that



his stepfather was merely trying to instill in him a strong sense of discipline and an appreciation for what is right and wrong. “Staying out of trouble was very difficult, because there was nobody guiding and mentoring me on what not to do. My stepfather believed that if you spared the rod, you spoiled the child. I guess at a point I simply became too scared to do wrong. The hidings I got helped in instilling the self-discipline I needed at the time”, Chrisjan shares.

Chrisjan also started focusing his energies on more productive and positive activities. Always the entertainer and storyteller, it came as no surprise to the family when he enrolled for drama classes. He auditioned at the Bricks Committed Artists Group who recognised his talent and handed him a few roles in some of its productions.

Big Break

Soon, Chrisjan’s big break came. He landed the role as the young Sam

Nujoma in the autobiographical motion picture about the life of the Founding Father. “Next thing I know, I was sitting next to Hollywood icon, Danny Glover. Imagine, this young boy with nothing in his life sitting next to this famous actor”, he shares.

His performance in ‘Where Others Wavered’ led to an offer to visit the United States, where Chrisjan was approached by an agent to sign up for more acting roles. However, after a lot of introspection and arriving at the conclusion that he was more comfortable behind, than in front of the cameras, Chrisjan turned down the offer and returned home, enrolling at the College of the Arts for a course in Television Production. “I realised I had very little capacity in operating a camera and the College of the Arts had an amazing programme with a very strong practical component”, he says.

Chrisjan excelled in his training under the tutelage of veteran

TV producer, Ted Scott. After graduating from the College of the Arts, he participated in further training opportunities at the then Polytechnic of Namibia and at the Cape Technikon in South Africa.

World of Work

The nbc initially employed Chrisjan as a Video Editor, responsible for assembling recorded video footage into finished television programmes that match the director’s vision and is suitable for broadcasting. “Ultimately, as a film and video editor, you bring sight and sound together in order to tell a cohesive story. It’s just one of my many skills”, he says. “However, my seniors soon recognised my potential and pushed me into producing programmes, because that was what I’ve been doing prior to joining the nbc’s TV Programmes Department”, Chrisjan adds.

Today, Chrisjan has established himself as one of the nbc’s leading producers, respected by his

peers and production teams as a dedicated and focused team leader. As a Senior Producer responsible for the production of a popular agricultural programme called ‘Green Horizons’, Chrisjan is also often called in to assist in the planning and production of documentary and special feature programmes. “I am known as Mr. Green Horizons. It’s an important programme. Not only does it highlight the growing importance of the agricultural sector, it also plays a big role in educating Namibians about efficient and productive farming methods”, he explains.

Creative Passion

Television production can be very demanding. It requires creativity and strong organisation skills. Producers often work long, unpredictable hours in a high-stress environment. Other than good communication, financial and managerial skills, producers also need to have an understanding of the latest camera and editing

technology. They must thrive under the pressures of deadlines, while scriptwriting and great storytelling skills is also a key prerequisite.

Chrisjan doesn't mind the unpredictable hours and deadlines. "TV Production is my passion. It gives me a heartbeat. It's similar to seeing a beautiful girl you admire. Everytime you see her your heart skips a beat. This is how I feel when I'm behind the camera. When I get the perfect shot, you'll see me jump up and down from excitement. It's a romantic process", he explains. "When I'm in my 'heartbeat' zone, I lose track of time; I'm in a different world. And it tells me that what I'm doing is what I love", he adds.

Training Advocate

Chrisjan appreciates that he is a rolemodel to young Namibians wishing to carve out a career in the television production industry. His industry peers appreciate him as an individual that always makes time for young producers, sharing advice and encouraging them to work even harder.

"I tell everyone wishing to enter this industry that there is a difference between influence and passion. Influence is you wanting to do it because others are doing it. Passion is you doing something because you love doing it. If your heart and soul is not in your work, then

you're not passionate about it", he explains.

"When you work in this trade you are not doing it for yourself, you are doing it for the entertainment of others. I did not have grey hair when I started out. But, it requires a lot of thinking and creativity in many aspects, while handling the camera, while engineering the sound, while in your editing suite, even while talking to people. You need to find creative ways to talk to someone to get the best out of that person. Otherwise, your production suffers", he adds.

Away from the nbc's production studios, Chrisjan enjoys spending time with his wife and children. Married life has brought a new passion - Cooking! And often

you will find Chrisjan donning his apron and trying out new recipes. "Cooking is a shared passion. Between my wife and I, and my mother who stays with us, we often try to come up with new dishes. It's a bit of a competition. And I'm winning", he notes. His mother, Christina, too remains a key part of Chrisjan's support system.

Chrisjan Apollus. A creative,

When I'm in my 'heartbeat' zone, I lose track of time; I'm in a different world. And it tells me that what I'm doing is what I love.





**What does it
take to become a
TV Producer?**



A Television Producer is responsible for a TV show's overall quality and ensures that all programmes stay on schedule. They create, organise and support the shooting of a television project, from inception to completion. Key aspects include researching materials, scripts, props and casting actors, presenters and anchors. A TV Producer's main purpose is to deal with the practical and business side of a project, to allow the director and crew to concentrate on the creative aspects. Producers have a wide range of responsibility, which includes scheduling, budget, talent management and creative control.

Skills and Knowledge

To be a TV Producer, you must be well-organised, be able to think quickly, and possess creativity. You'll often work long, unpredictable hours in a high-stress environment. Other than good communication, financial and managerial skills, producers need to be able to interact with and lead other people, as well as have an understanding of the latest camera and editing technology. TV Producers must be flexible and thrive under the pressures of deadlines. They must also be able to quickly problem-solve any production or staffing issues that may arise. Scriptwriting is a key skill and great storytelling ability is essential to create engaging programmes that make a lasting

impression.

Training

Training programmes typically cover both theoretical and practical components in all aspects of production, including set design, choreography, lighting, graphics, cinematography, sound, and video editing. Qualified entrants often start as a runner or production assistant, whereas producers of factual programmes often start as program researchers. Many start off in production office roles, such as production secretary and production coordinator, from which they progress to middle-level production roles. Additional coursework in a particular area, such as finance and management is often helpful for TV producers.

Working Conditions

TV Production is a high-stakes job with demanding deadlines and erratic work schedules. Often, outside shoots take long as it requires elaborate rigging and lighting. TV equipment is heavy and physical dexterity and fitness is important. It takes many different types of people, both on and off set, to create a broadcast programme, so a producer must know how to effectively convey ideas to staff, while at the same time keep to time and budgetary arrangements. Patience, endurance and tenacity are other key

considerations in this cutthroat industry.

Job Prospects

As a TV Producer, you can work for public and private broadcast networks, news corporations and production houses. Job security is often directly tied to an employer's longevity. The local media industry is growing fast and evolving viewer habits are also a factor, as the internet is impacting on viewer habits. Future opportunities for television producers may be found in a variety of multimedia formats, including digital production and Internet programming. Prospective employers typically require writing samples or a reel of production clips. You too can live your passion and become a TV Producer. If you are a good storyteller, creative and have an eye for detail, you are a good candidate.



Passion is you doing something because you love doing it. If your heart and soul is not in your work, then you're not passionate about it.



LIVE YOUR PASSION

12

Paul !Nomiseb

Panelbeater

Panelbeaters, often called collision repair technicians repair or replace body parts of vehicles that have been damaged. The demand for panelbeaters continues to grow due to an increase in vehicle ownership rates.

Meet 40-year old Paul Nomiseb, a skilled panelbeater, employed by Thiel's Body Works in the capital, who despite not having any formal qualifications, has overcome many odds in living his passion. This is his story.

Childhood Dream

Paul !Nomiseb hails from the Kunene region. Born at Outjo, he grew up in the dusty streets of Khorixas where he attended the Brunvels Agricultural School and later the Mureti Secondary School.

Paul's father was a panelbeater too. Spending school holidays and weekends being his helper, it soon became obvious he had a talent and a passion for the occupation. "I learned my early panelbeating skills from him. In fact, he gave me my very first panelbeating assignment when he ran over a warthog and asked me to remove the fender from the pickup and hammer out some of the damage", he recalls.

According to Paul, the dream to follow in his father's footsteps was born that day. "I should say thank you to that warthog, I guess. It got me hooked in pursuing my dream", he shares.

Technically-Inclined

Circumstances were difficult, though. Paul's parents found the going tough in raising their seven daughters and three sons. And



since Paul was the one that didn't perform too well academically, he had to drop out in Grade 6 to seek employment at the coastal town of Henties Bay, where he landed a job as a gardener.

"I was brought up to work with my hands. My father always said that if you have ten fingers, you can work and don't have to go hungry. Gardening wasn't my dream job, but it generated an income to sustain myself and help my parents and siblings.", Paul notes.

Despite the setback, Paul remained resolute to follow his dream. Luckily for him, one of his gardening clients was the owner of Smith's Garage, a small Henties Bay autobody repair shop, to whom Paul volunteered his services. The owner saw Paul's potential and took him in as an apprentice trainee. His dreams were back on track.

In-Service Training

Paul grabbed the opportunity to work as an apprentice with both hands. "I was like a kid in a candy store. Working in a fully-fledged workshop with modern equipment and oxy-acetylene cutting equipment technology was world's apart from what I was used to working with my father. I was like a sponge, absorbing everything I was taught.

A commitment to quality workmanship has since seen Paul amassing considerable experience at several employers over the years, at Swakopmund, Outjo and Walvis Bay. He moved to Windhoek in 2008 and is now employed at Thiel's Body Works, located in the capital's Southern Industrial Area. "I've just always had this natural ability to work with metal. It's difficult to explain. It's like I can feel the curves and lines of the bodywork under my hands and touching it tells me whether I've

been able to reshape those lines and curves", he explains. "I realised that since I've never completed school and didn't have any qualifications, the quality of my work and my reputation should be my CV. I'm proud in saying that wherever I've worked, my supervisors were always happy with my work. I have the testimonials to prove it", Paul highlights.

Lifelong Learner

Paul's infectious enthusiasm for what he does and his dedication to quality workmanship make him an asset to the Thiel's Body Works team, where he is considered the 'go-to-man' for the big jobs. "I love working at Thiel's. We are a good team and the owners appreciate my work. They recently awarded me with a certificate for 'Most Valuable Worker'. I am also a shopsteward for my fellow workers and act as a link between them and the management. Not too shabby for someone with no qualifications", he says.

Clearly hooked by his profession, Paul loves seeing his work evolve; whether that be fixing up a car that has been in an accident, or doing restoration work. "Panelbeating is not one of those anyone-can-do-it jobs. It requires precision and lots of patience. You need to be able to read and understand measurements and specifications; have a good understanding of metals, vehicle body parts and mechanics; and be able to work with hand tools and machines", he explains.

"The learning doesn't really ever end. As an experienced panelbeater, I continue to learn new methods and aspects of the trade", he adds.

Big Dreams

The demand for panelbeaters continues to grow. With more private vehicles on the road, there has been an increase in crashes, which then require the services of

panelbeaters. Many experienced panelbeaters, especially those who have also mastered spraypainting, choose to go into business for themselves.

Working for a leading collision repair company, Paul is gaining invaluable insight into the running of a professional business. Although committed to his employer, he harbours dreams of opening his own autobody repair shop. He is already making work of this venture, doing repairs on vehicles after hours and over weekends. "Often, people don't seem to take me seriously when I share my dream. Perhaps, they think I don't have the resources and business skills. And although I agree that it will be difficult to do so without any financial backing and support, I am confident that I will make it happen", he shares.

"I want to honour my father's legacy. But, when you follow in your father's footsteps you have to leave a bigger imprint. I now know what it takes to make a success in this industry. It's all about customer service and quality workmanship. And with God on my side, I can do it, and one day open the doors to my own workshop. With him, anything is possible", Paul adds.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Away from work, Paul remains the same warm and down-to-earth person, who enjoys spending

quality time with his family. As a skilled, but unqualified craftsman, Paul is also eager to enroll for assessment under the Namibia Training Authority's Recognition of Prior Learning programme. Under this programme, skilled artisans with the requisite work experience can enroll for assessment and obtain certification.

"I've learned about the programme and that soon assessment will also be possible in the field of Panelbeating. With the support of my employer, I intend registering for assessment soon. This is a wonderful initiative for so many other artisans who are good and skilled at what they do, but who are denied opportunities because they don't have the papers", he notes.

Paul !Nomiseb. Humble, committed, dedicated, passionate. Although he holds no qualifications in his profession, he is competent and skilled. His story teaches us to never be overwhelmed by our circumstances.

That there will always be obstacles, doubters and setbacks along the way. But that with hard work, perseverance and self-belief, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

It's like I can feel the curves and lines of the bodywork under my hands and touching it tells me whether I've been able to reshape those lines and curves.

”



**What does it
take to become a
Panelbeater?**



Panelbeaters, or collision repair technicians repair or replace body parts of cars, trucks or other vehicles that have been damaged. They repair damage to metal, fibreglass and plastic vehicle bodywork and prepare estimates for repairs. They remove damaged panels from the vehicle, which may involve unbolting or cutting. In some cases dents are hammered out, while in others, panels need to be replaced. If the vehicle is badly damaged it may need to be pulled back into shape using an auto robot. The panelbeater needs to fill any gaps, then file, ground and sand them to a smooth finish. Any other parts that have been removed, such as locks or handles, are replaced.

Skills and Knowledge

A panelbeater needs to be able to read and understand measurements and specifications; have a good understanding of metals, vehicle body parts and mechanics; and be able to work with hand tools and machines. They need to be enthusiastic about cars and enjoy practical and manual work. It is important that they have full use of hands and fingers, good vision and be physically able. They also need to stay abreast of the latest methods and technology in the industry, and be proficient with a wide range of tools such as oxy-acetylene cutting equipment, hammers to remove dents and electric welding equipment.

Training

Training programmes typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Many apprentice trainees enter into formal training contracts with an employer, where they spend most of their time working and learning practical skills on the job, while also undertaking structured training. However, this occupation tends to be one where the learning doesn't really ever end, and experienced panelbeaters continue to learn new methods and aspects of the trade, as the need arises.

Working Conditions

A panelbeater would normally work in a workshop for a crash repairer, service station, or car dealer. Being a panelbeater is physically demanding. Strength, stamina, and an ability to work in a variety of environments are all assets you'll need before you decide to pick up a planishing hammer. The work environment tends to be noisy and dusty. Things

can get dirty, as you might spend a lot of time sanding off body parts. Since they often share workshop space with spraypainters, the work environment can also be fummy. They usually work regular business hours.

Job Prospects

Most panel beaters begin their careers as trainees before progressing to become senior panel technicians after approximately five years. After this point, an individual may progress to become a body shop manager or advisor, which is a role concerned with supervising. Though better paid, this role is usually less hands-on in terms of bodywork repair. Another related option is coach-building where you can manufacture and assemble the frames and parts for cars and commercial vehicles such as buses, vans, trucks, caravans and motor homes.

You too can live your passion and become a Panelbeater. If you are good at problem solving, patient, accurate and have an eye for detail, you are a good candidate.

- REPLACE + REPAIR BODYWORK BACK TO FACTORY STATE
- CHASSIS STRAIGHTENING
- FITTING OF PARTS

- TRAINING COURSE
- APPRENTICESHIP
- LIFELONG LEARNING

- MATHEMATICAL APTITUDE
- MECHANICALLY-INCLINED
- MANUAL WORK
- TOOL PROFICIENCY

With God on my side, I can do it and one day open the doors to my own workshop. With him, anything is possible.

”

- PHYSICALLY DEMANDING
- VARIETY OF ENVIRONMENTS
- DUSTY + NOISY WORK
- REGULAR HOURS

- MORE VEHICLES
- GOOD PROSPECTS
- SELF-EMPLOYMENT
- SEVERAL RELATED TRADES

LIVE YOUR PASSION

13

Lukas Nghinyengwa

Electrician

Electricians design, install, maintain and troubleshoot electrical wiring systems in homes, commercial or industrial buildings, and even machines and large pieces of equipment. Not only do they install new electrical components and systems, they also maintain and repair existing electrical infrastructure.

Meet 38-year old Lukas Nghinyengwa, a skilled Electrician, employed by Oshakati Premier Electric. Lukas gave up on a career as a police officer and opted to follow his dream to become an electrician. This is his story.

Tough Childhood

Lukas Nghinyengwa grew up at the Oshikulu village outside Oshakati in Ohangwena. Like many of his

village contemporaries, Lukas enjoyed a carefree and peaceful childhood far away from the hustle and bustle of city life, herding cattle and tending to other village chores.

“I grew up with my grandmother at Oshikulu as my parents stayed at another nearby village, Omalaala. Life wasn’t easy though. My mother made traditional jewelry and baskets to supplement the family income and to pay for my school fees”, Lukas recalls.

After he completed Grade 12 at the Gabriel Shitambu Senior Secondary School, this village boy wanted to become a Police Officer. Graduating in 2001, he was posted to the Otjozondjupa region, where he served the communities of Otjiwarongo and Okakarara.



Wayward Dreams

It was during this time that Lukas found himself becoming more and more disillusioned about his career choice. “It’s not that I didn’t enjoy police work. I just felt that something was missing. That I wasn’t meant to be a police officer and that I should look for something else to do”, he notes.

The disillusionment grew. Lukas soon resigned from the Police Force and instead enrolled for training as an electrician at the KAYEC Centre at Ondangwa. His friends and family found his choice strange, because Lukas never demonstrated an interest in becoming an electrician. However, they have since grown to love the career choice he had made. “To be honest, I was never interested in becoming an electrician. However, my interest grew as I progressed with my training. I realised that I was actually just a technically-inclined individual that had to find something to do with my hands”, he shares.

The course at KAYEC Ondangwa convinced Lukas that becoming a qualified electrician was what he wanted to do. He soon enrolled at the Okakarara Vocational Training Centre in Otjozondjupa, where he is still remembered by his instructors as a dedicated and committed trainee, who excelled in his training.

World of Work

Upon acquiring his Level 3 certification at Okakarara VTC, Lukas returned home to the Ohangwena region, where he landed employment as an Electrician at Oshakati Premier Electric, a company responsible for supplying power to the town and for maintaining and upgrading its street and traffic lights and networks.

“I guess the reason why I am excelling as an electrician today is because I enjoy solving problems. Perhaps this explains why I find electrical fault-finding so interesting”, he argues.

“I love my job. Our company renders an important service to the community. Without reliable and efficient electricity service provision, this community will stagnate and not develop economically. Electricians do important work. Electricity drives the economy. That’s the long and short of it”, Lukas highlights.

Depending on their area of specialty, electricians work either indoors or outdoors, year round. In either case, their work is often labour intensive and requires manual physical manipulation of electrical wiring and cabling conduit, often having to endure inclement weather in order to repair power outages.

Team Player

His enthusiasm and dedication for what he does make Lukas a respected member of the Oshakati Premier Electric team. Supervisors

and colleagues alike appreciate his technical competence and willingness in always going the extra mile.

“I continue to grow at Oshakati Premier Electric. Learning doesn’t stop really and although the basics remain the same, things change fast in this dynamic work environment that requires all electricians to stay abreast of the latest developments in our field”, Lukas explains.

“At the end of the day, it is all about reputation. Your reputation as an electrician that performs quality work and in time, is what will eventually make or break you. My supervisors are happy with my output. They value my contribution, because it adds to the company’s bottom line”, he adds.

Budding Entrepreneur

Lukas is also a budding entrepreneur and has used his savings in establishing a small, but thriving frozen chicken and fish outlet.

“My passion for business comes from my biological mother, Justina Gideon. She is a hardworking woman who inspired all of her children to become business people. She used to sell fish, and now she makes and sell jewellery. She is very business-minded”, he notes.

Although small, the outlet continues to grow and is proving popular amongst members of the community. However, according to Lukas, this shop is not about making money and supplementing my income only; It is also about bringing alternatives cheaper and healthier than beef to the community. “Business is good. More and more people are coming to buy our fish products every day. They really like fish”, he says.

Village Boy

Whenever the opportunity arises, Lukas makes time to go back to the village. He appreciates the role his parents and family played in his upbringing and in the career success he enjoys today.

“I would not have been able to succeed, without the support of my family, especially that of my mother. She worked and supported me while I was studying and she remains my pillar and my strength”, Lukas says. “You need to appreciate the things others do for you. Today, I am able to support my parents and my three children. I am empowered, because I am skilled and competent. No one can take my skills away from me”, he adds.

Lukas’ advice for others wishing to follow in his footsteps, is simple and straightforward: “Don’t expect that your dreams will come to you by just sitting around and waiting for things to happen out of the blue. You need to work for your dreams. When I left the Police Force to pursue my ambition to become an

artisan, I did just that. I followed my dreams”, he shares.

Lukas Nghinyengwa. His story teaches us that we all have within us the strength and passion to reach for the stars and make our dreams a reality. That all our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them. That we can achieve anything through self-belief, hard work and determination.

He is living his passion as an Electrician. And he believes that others can do the same.

Don’t expect that your dreams will come to you by just sitting around and waiting for things to happen out of the blue. You need to make work of your dream





**What does it
take to become an
Electrician?**



Electricians are tradesmen whose responsibilities are to design, install, maintain and troubleshoot electrical wiring systems. These systems can be located in homes, commercial or industrial buildings, and even machines and large pieces of equipment. Inside wiremen, as the name implies, spend most of their careers working indoors. Working with blueprints, they install new electrical systems in new buildings and troubleshoot problems or replace older systems. Outside linemen, by contrast, work outdoors most of their careers. They must exhibit a moderate amount of physical fitness due to the requirement of climbing telephone and power poles when a lift bucket is not available.

Skills and Knowledge

Not only does the electrician have to be good at mathematics, they have to know how to read blueprints and technical schematics. Organisation and good planning and troubleshooting skills are vital. There are no shortcuts when it comes to working with electricity and good electricians are those who know how its supposed to work and what makes it work safely. Electricians also will need to have the stamina to climb ladders and stairs repetitively and crawl through attics and other inhospitable areas. In many cases, the electrician need to be able to work longer than an eight hour day to ensure that a project that can't be completed in one day, is left in safe circumstances.

Training

Training programmes at registered training institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Due to the sometimes dangerous nature of their work, the electrician's apprenticeship is overseen and supervised by senior electricians, who are seasoned practitioners who exhibit a high degree of technical skill in their trade. During their apprenticeship, electricians are required to complete instruction in electrical theory and electrical building codes. Aside from technical certifications, electricians must be able to work with a wide variety of tools and testing equipment. Common tools, like diagonal and needle-nose pliers are just as essential to an electrician's work as more complicated equipment like multi-meters and insulation resistance testers.

Working Conditions

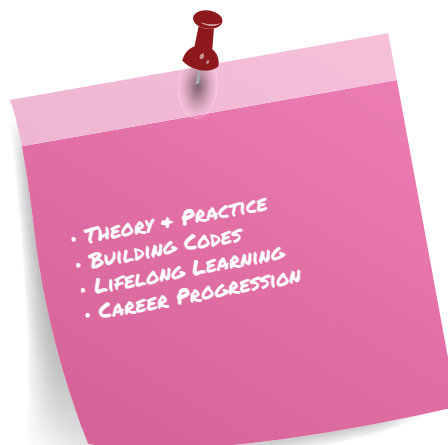
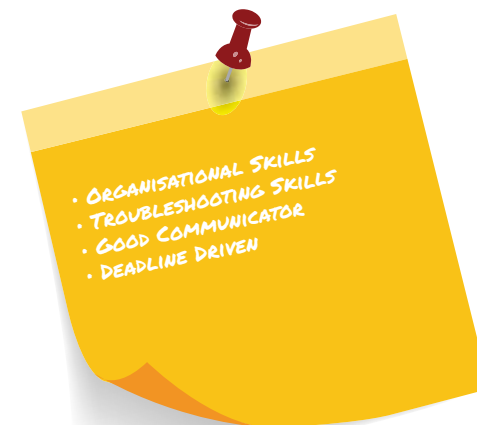
Electricians can be found working inside and outside, at personal residences, factories, and construction worksites. Working as an electrician can be exhausting since they lift heavy loads, stand and knee for long stretches at a times, and twist and contort conduit. Working as an electrician can also be dangerous since there is always a risk to get cut or electrocuted, so it is essential to adhere to safety protocols. Some electricians work in inclement weather, and electricians often must spend a lot of time traveling to worksites. Job



Prospects

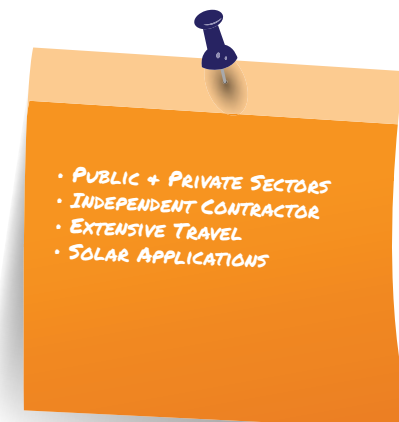
Electricity is a vital part of every day life. It keeps food cold, water warm, and houses cool or warm as needed. Electricians, trained to do the varied tasks needed to meet the needs of an electricity-driven society will always be in demand. A growing number of electricians gain competency in several types of electrical work, allowing them to work both indoors and outdoors. Travel is an essential part of the day, especially for independent contractors. Maintenance electricians, by contrast, work a standard 40-hour week. In some instances, these electricians may work on an on-call basis, commit to overtime hours or work night shifts. Some contractors also branch onto solar systems and applications.

You too can live your passion and become an Electrician. If you are fit, a quick thinker and possess mathematical aptitude, you are a good candidate.



I enjoy solving problems. Perhaps this explains why I find electrical fault-finding so interesting and why I am excelling in this area.

”



LIVE YOUR PASSION

14

Elizabeth Kambonde

Auto Electrician

A Trailblazer for Women in Auto-Electrics

The electronic technology we put into our vehicles is getting more complex by the day. Most modern cars have a wide range of electronic equipment controlling all aspects of performance. Auto Electricians install, maintain and repair the electrical wiring, parts and electrical and electronic systems in vehicles.

Meet 38-year old Elizabeth Kambonde, a skilled Auto-Electrician, employed by diamond mining giant, Namdeb as a workshop foreman at its Southern Coastal Mines Plant at Oranjemund. This is her story.

Early Disappointment

Elizabeth Kambonde grew up at the

Onembaba village near Okalongo in the Omusati region. Her father passed away when she was very young, and it was her mother, as the sole breadwinner, who had to support the family and ensure that the children attend school.

As a product of the Oshikoto Senior Secondary School at Tsumeb, Elizabeth's Grade 12 results were not good enough to enroll for training as a nurse, her childhood dream. "I always wanted to be a nurse. Even now, if people say they don't feel well, it just comes naturally to me to help them and advise them what to do or what medicine to take", she notes.

With her dreams shattered, Elizabeth enrolled at the Namibia College of Open Learning to improve her grades, and took





on a job as a cashier at a local supermarket.

Parental Guidance

Elizabeth vividly recalls how her mother one day walked into the supermarket and confronted her about how long she still planned to work there.

“She was adamant that I enroll at the Rundu Vocational Training Centre and instructed me to complete the applications forms. Not even my excuses that I didn’t know anyone at Rundu and that I didn’t even had a place to stay, could deter my mother. She was resolute that I go there and enroll for a course”, Elizabeth remembers.

Arriving at Rundu VTC, Elizabeth joined other prospective trainees on a guided tour of the centre, during which trainers shared information about the various occupational training areas, on offer. “Auto-Mechanics was actually my first

choice, but the centre’s officials felt that my bodyframe was too small and that I did not have the physical strength and dexterity required for this trade. Auto-Electrician was my second choice and the centre accepted my application”, she says.

Exciting Training

Elizabeth excelled in her training. Being one of a handful of girls in her class only motivated her to work harder and to invest all her time and energy in her training and apprenticeship. “I realised early on that as a woman, I had to work extra hard. I had no choice: My male peers obviously had an advantage, because they’ve been exposed to some aspects of the trade. I had nothing, no background, whatsoever”, she states.

Her hard work and commitment paid off and upon graduation, Elizabeth landed employment as an Auto-Electrician at Namdeb, where she also made a good impression

during an apprenticeship stint in 2004. “I believe I impressed them, because I demonstrated to my supervisors that despite being a woman, I was able to meet expectations. That despite being a woman, I was able to compete with my male peers. That I wanted the opportunity”, she explains

Career Progression

Today, Namdeb employs Elizabeth as a Workshop Supervisor, at its Uubvley Heavy Commercial Vehicle Engineering Workshop, where she leads an 18-member all-male team, comprising of artisans and artisan assistants.

Elizabeth remains adamant that she applied because she knew she could do the job. “Although I was aware of Namdeb’s programme to support and encourage its female employees to grow and develop in otherwise male-dominated career paths, I never applied to

be appointed on the basis of my gender. Rather, I applied, because I believed that I was a good candidate, and because I’ve built up a track record of solid performance and competence”, she stresses.

Asked whether she had the support of her male subordinates after her appointment, Elizabeth highlights that although she could sense that a few had their reservations, she has been able to win them over. “It was challenging at first, but I believe that as fellow artisans, they’ve now accepted me as a competent, knowledgeable and skilled team leader. I’ve been able to earn their respect and trust”, she adds.

Women’s Ambassador

Under Elizabeth’s leadership, the workshop team has successfully put in place a planning system that clearly indicates performance and progress being made towards targets. The team also has a proud

safety record and their storeroom was recently recognised the neatest storeroom, during an environmental audit.

Elizabeth appreciates that her journey of success in what is still very much a male-dominated trade, can serve to inspire Namibian girl-children to enter technical and vocational career paths. “My message to technically-inclined girl children is simple – Don’t fear this work. Yes, you will have to work harder to succeed, but challenge yourself and take it upon yourself to show others that irrespective of your gender, as long as you are given the equal opportunity, you can succeed and deliver to expectations”, she notes.

“Success comes with hard work. I am succeeding, because I perform. And while I often still encounter instances of men doubting my ability, I’m not provoked by their doubt, because I know that I can deliver to expectations. And I always do”, she adds.

Lifelong Learner

Electronic technology in vehicles is getting more complex by the day. Most modern vehicles have a wide range of electronic equipment controlling all aspects of performance.

Although a supervisor, Elizabeth appreciates that she has to stay

abreast of the latest technologies. And often, you will find her under a bonnet checking and testing wiring and components. “It’s all about attitude. We sometimes encounter new technologies, whilst not having any training in such technologies. But, as artisans, we make sure that we apply the basics and get such new technologies under the belt, even without the manuals. Others rely on us to fix the problems, because if we don’t, production might suffer”, she says.

Away from the mine, Elizabeth tries to spend as much time possible with her husband, who is based at Luderitz and her two daughters who stay with her at Oranjemund.

Elizabeth Kambonde - Humble, but resolute. Small in stature,

but big in heart. Her story teaches us that leadership is not about a title or a designation, it’s about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire others to strive for the best they can be. As a leader, she knows the way, she goes the way and she shows the way.

She is living her passion as an Auto-Electrician in a world dominated by men. And she believes that other young women can do the same.

I realised that as a woman, I had to work extra hard. My male peers obviously had an advantage, because they’ve been exposed to some aspects of the trade. I had nothing, no background, whatsoever.

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**What does it
take to become an
Auto Electrician?**



An Auto Electrician is an Electrician who specializes in the electric systems contained within automotive vehicles. An Auto Electrician is an expert on all of the systems in your car that you only notice when something goes wrong. Your headlights, diagnostic lights, alarm system, circuit board, alternator and starter motor all fall under the Auto Electrician's domain of expertise. They carry out tests on automotive electrical systems to diagnose faults and repair and replace automotive electrical systems such as charging and starting systems. They also repair and replace electronic systems such as air-conditioning systems, ABS brakes, electronically controlled gearboxes, instrument panels and vehicle computers. Auto-Electricians also install car security and entertainment systems.

Skills and Knowledge

Auto-Electricians need to have knowledge of automotive electronics, including electrical theory, circuit diagrams and electronic components. Basic engineering and vehicle mechanics are also essential skills. Auto-Electricians need to be accurate, logical, methodical, patient and safety-conscious. Auto-Electricians need to have good hand-eye co-ordination and normal colour vision. They also need to be agile and have good flexibility for working in small spaces.

Training

Training programmes at registered training institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical


components. Useful school subjects to secure enrollment include English, Mathematics and Science. Typically, training courses enable participants to gain skills in all aspects of the automotive electrical trade and covers components such as health and safety, using tools, and repairing, servicing and testing all the elements of auto-electrical systems. You will be assessed to show that you have achieved the skills and knowledge required by the course. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods.

Working Conditions

The technology we put into our cars is getting more complex by the day. Most modern cars and motorbikes have a wide range of electronic equipment controlling all aspects of performance. And as an Auto-Electrician you will spend a lot of time under the bonnet checking and testing wiring. Auto-Electricians mainly work regular business hours, but may also work overtime and be on call. Although most work is performed in workshops and garages, Auto-Electricians often travel locally to call-outs on the road.

Job Prospects

The demand for Auto-Electricians has increased largely because newer cars have more complex electrical systems that require people with specialist skills to work on them. Types of employers include specialised auto-electrical workshops, motor vehicle dealerships, general motor vehicle servicing companies or automotive engineering workshops.

- 
- ELECTRONIC WIRING + PARTS
 - DIAGNOSE + REPAIR FAULTS
 - INSTALLATIONS + MAINTENANCE
 - TROUBLESHOOTING

- 
- ELECTRONICS
 - BASIC ENGINEERING/MECHANICS
 - LOGICAL + METHODOICAL
 - HAND-EYE COORDINATION

- 
- THEORY + PRACTICE
 - DIAGRAMMES + SCHEMATICS
 - LIFELONG LEARNING
 - CAREER PROGRESSION

Don't fear this work. Yes, you will have to work harder to succeed, but challenge yourself and show others that irrespective of your gender, as long as you are given the equal opportunity, you can succeed.

”

- 
- REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS
 - WORKSHOPS/GARAGES
 - ROAD CALL-OUTS

- 
- INCREASING DEMAND
 - WORKSHOPS + DEALERSHIPS
 - SELF-EMPLOYMENT
 - SPECIALISED APPLICATIONS

LIVE YOUR PASSION

15

Kleopas Martin

Brewer

A True Trailblazer in an Exciting Industry

Brewers make ale or beer from malt and hops by infusion, boiling, and fermentation. Put simply, brewing is the practice of regulating the interactions between water, starch, yeast, and hops so that the end result is what is called beer.

Meet 33-year old Kleopas Martin, a qualified brewer employed by Namibia Breweries, a subsidiary of the Ohlthaver and List Group. Kleopas has successfully entered a career path, which until recently, was not an option for Namibians from previously disadvantaged groups. This is his story.

Childhood Dreams

Kleopas Martin hails from Ondangwa in the Otjikoto region, where he grew up with his four sisters and two brothers. He attended the Oluno Primary School, whereafter he moved on to Ongha Senior Secondary School, where he completed Grade 12.

“I was just an average guy. Most of the time, you’ll find me reading and studying. But, I also enjoyed gardening and playing football with friends during my spare time. However, what mattered most was my schoolwork.”, he recalls.

Kleopas’ childhood dream was to become an engineer. Always a conscientious and diligent learner, his Grade 12 results were of such that it landed him entry into a two-year Engineering Bridging course at the University of Namibia.





Golden Opportunity

Kleopas passed the bridging course with flying colours. However, as fate would have it, his dream to pursue further studies in Engineering in neighbouring South Africa did not materialise.

Realising that he couldn't afford to sit idle and driven by a strong desire to make something of his life, Kleopas applied for a Namibia Breweries Limited (NBL) scholarship to qualify as a brewer. "I was desperate. And honestly, I didn't think at the time that I stood a chance, because a key requirement was for applicants to be fluent in German. I couldn't speak any German", he recalls.

Shortly after submitting his application, Kleopas was also awarded a bursary to further his Engineering studies in South Africa. But, before he could even accept the bursary, Namibia

Breweries called him in for a series of interviews and tests. "Although I gave it my best shot, I wasn't very confident after the tests. However, two weeks later they invited me for another assessment. I was waiting in the reception area after this test, when the Manager came out and told me I was the successful candidate. I started my apprenticeship immediately", Kleopas shares.

Exciting Apprenticeship

Kleopas excelled under the Namibia Breweries' three-year Apprentice Brewer Programme, which covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of the job. "I found the subject matter very interesting. From the chemistry and fermentation to safety considerations and personal hygiene. I wanted to know everything about the brewing process and I made it a point to do so", he says.

Upon completing his apprenticeship, Kleopas left for Germany to further his studies towards becoming a qualified Brewer and Maltster. He reached this goal in 2006, after which Namibia Breweries employed him as a Brewer, at its Windhoek plant. "The apprenticeship and training programmes really made the transition to the real world of work very easy and I was able to hit the ground running", he notes.

Specialised Trade

Kleopas worked as a Brewer for a few years, during which period, he gained a lot of experience in the running of a brewing plant and exposure to the overall production process.

Convinced that he has made the right career decision, he decided to further his studies and enrolled for further training to qualify as a Brewmaster, in 2012. "I joined the NBL's three-and-a-half-year

rotational programme, which exposes you to all departments in the production line. They focus on all aspects, from packaging and utilities to engineering and projects. You develop an thorough understanding of what's happening behind the scenes in every department", he explains.

As a graduate of the NBL Brewmaster Programme, Kleopas now works as at the Unit Manager of the Packaging Department. He is recognised by supervisors and colleagues alike as a committed and skilled craftsman and a methodical and organised team member. "The biggest challenge in my job is leading people in keeping up with production demands. Leading people is not an easy thing. We work with machines and machines

need to be maintained. Your plans sometimes change from day to day. You have to prioritise, go back to the drawing board and plan again. You need to be flexible”, he explains.

Career Ambitions

In spite of the challenges, Kleopas is excelling in his job. He has ambitious plans to further grow and establish himself as a Brewmaster of note. “My passion for brewing comes from the heart and it motivates me to come to work everyday. In the next three to five years, I see myself as one of the top managers in the NBL supply chain”, he shares.

Kleopas also appreciates the fact that he has become a rolemodel for Namibians, especially those from previously disadvantaged groups. While embracing his status as an ambassador for prospective brewer apprentices, he warns anyone wishing to enter this career path, that it requires heaps of self-discipline and commitment. “Being in the business for fourteen years and having worked myself up through the ranks was not a walk in the park, at all. It required heaps of hard work and dedication. You have to stay positive and focused on your goals”, he highlights.

Kleopas now takes it upon himself to mentor other newcomer

apprentices, who have decided on this career option. “Mentoring has become a day-to-day thing. I’ve benefitted immensely from others mentoring me and I now have the same responsibility to also transfer my knowledge and skill to our newcomers”, he says.

Shared Passion

Regardless of the fact that he has established himself as a key member in the NBL value chain, Kleopas remains humble and unpretentious. His calm demeanour and work ethic make him a productive and efficient colleague and a loyal and trusted friend.

“I am motivated by our leadership and organisational culture. At NBL,

we motivate each other to always do better and excel. We support each other to grow, not only in the work we do, but as human beings. We work as a team and we share our passion for brewing”, Kleopas explains.

There’s the saying that if life throws you lemons, to make lemonade. Kleopas Martin has decided to take the lemons life threw at him and to make beer, instead. Humble, but driven, his story teaches us that without continual growth

and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have little meaning. That achievement is all about honest endeavor and persistent effort to do the best possible under any, and all circumstances.

He is living his passion as a Brewer. And he believes that other young men and women can do the same.

I didn’t think at the time that I stood a chance to land the appreneticeship, because a key requirement was for applicants to be fluent in German. I couldn’t speak any German.

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**What does it
take to become a
Brewer?**



Brewers produce and test beers and similar products, such as cider. They select the type of barley, grain, yeast, hops and any other ingredients that are to be used and add them to the mix at the correct times. Once the ingredients have been mixed, brewers monitor the temperature, pH values and level of fermentation of the brew. Once a beer has fermented the brewer tests it to check the quality and taste of the batch, before it is packaged and distributed.

Skills and Knowledge

Brewers need to be able to take initiative; practical and efficient; accurate, with an eye for detail; patient and reliable; and able to work well in a team. A brewer also needs a good sense of taste and smell and possess good organisational and communication skills. Mechanical skills will also stand you in good stead as brewers also use specially designed equipment to filter and carbonate the beer, and to fill kegs, bottles and cans. Brewers also need to be familiar with computers in order to operate machinery and monitor the progress of each batch.

Training

Training programmes typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Useful school subjects to secure enrollment include English, German and Science. Many brewery companies often employ apprenticeship programmes. You can improve your prospects for such apprenticeship and further opportunities by completing science courses, including chemistry, food

science, microbiology, biochemistry or chemical engineering.

Working Conditions

Brewers may work in large manufacturing plants, producing a number of different varieties of beer in large volumes for sale throughout Namibia and, in some cases, overseas. Some brewers may work in smaller, micro or boutique breweries, producing a smaller variety and/or volume of beer, usually for sale in a smaller, local market. Regardless of the size of the brewery, conditions can range from hot and noisy through to cold and wet. Brewers may sometimes be required to work in enclosed spaces, such as tanks and brewing vessels. They need to have a high level of personal hygiene and may be required to regularly wash their hands and wear protective clothing to avoid contaminating the beer. Brewers working in larger breweries may sometimes be required to work shifts, which may include working nights and weekends.

Job Prospects

Chances of getting a job as a brewer are average. Though demand for people in the role is rising, it is still a relatively small occupation, and competition for positions is high. Pay for brewers vary depending on experience and location. While many brewers prefer the opportunity to work their way up into senior roles at established breweries, others are opting for the fast-evolving craft beer, or micro-brewery market, which has

excellent potential for brewers wishing to employ themselves by brewing and marketing their own beer.

- PRODUCE + TEST BEERS
- TEMPERATURE, FERMENTATION
- QUALITY ASSURANCE
- PACKAGING + DISTRIBUTION

- INITIATIVE
- DETAIL-ORIENTED
- ORGANISATIONAL + COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- COMPUTER LITERATE

- THEORY + PRACTICE
- LANGUAGES - GERMAN
- BREWERY APPRENTICESHIP
- LIFELONG LEARNING

Becoming a Brewer is not a walk in the park, at all. It requires heaps of hard work and dedication. You have to stay positive and focused on your goals.

”

- LARGE VS MICRO PLANTS
- HOT + NOISY
- COLD + WET
- PERSONAL HYGIENE

- GROWING SECTOR
- HIGH COMPETITION
- CAREER GROWTH
- SELF-EMPLOYMENT



LIVE YOUR PASSION

16

Echenberry Hamata

Crane Operator

From Toy Cars to Container Cranes

Crane Operators use cranes to move objects such as materials on construction sites and containers on wharves. Meet 44-year old Echenberry Hamata, a highly skilled Crane Operator who specializes in the latter and who is employed by the Namibia Ports Authority (NAMPORT), at the Walvis Bay harbour. Echenberry has successfully entered a career path that has seen him moving up the ranks at NAMPORT. This is his story.

Carefree Childhood

A father of six children, Echenberry was born at Walvis Bay, in Erongo. At the age of five, his mother passed away and he moved to the north to stay with his grandparents. Echenberry started

school at Oshitayi Primary School at Ondangwa. Like many boys of his age; Echenberry liked playing with toy cars. "I grew up with seven of my cousins and when we were not busy helping our grandparents after school, we would play with our toy cars. We couldn't really afford the toy cars from the store and ended up making our own", he reminisces. After completing Grade 12 at Oluno Senior Secondary School in 1994, Echenberry joined many of his classmates in migrating to the capital the following year, hoping to land an opportunity that would allow him to enroll for further studies.

World of Work

However, no such opportunities arose and realising that he could not afford to sit idle, Echenberry



went home to Ondangwa and started job-hunting. He got lucky and landed his first job at Namibia Beverages at its Coca-Cola Plant at Oshakati. Echenberry worked at Namibia Beverages until 2002, when he took up employment at BR International, a local logistics and clearing agency. “I was driving imported cars from the Ariamsvlei Border Post up north to the Oshikango Border Post. These were cars in transit, imported from China through the Durban Harbour. I enjoyed it. It reminded me of my carefree childhood when we drove our selfmade toy cars”, he shares.

BR International soon promoted Echenberry as its Operations Manager at the Ariamsvlei Border Post. However, realising that he wasn’t made for office and administration work, and that he enjoyed operating vehicles and engines much more, he applied for

a job at Namdeb as a Multi-Skilled Operator, in 2005.

Earthmoving Equipment

It was at Namdeb that Echenberry was trained to operate a wide range of earthmoving equipment. “I don’t know what it was, but I thoroughly enjoyed operating the earthmoving equipment. I still do. Perhaps, it’s the torque of the engines and how the intricate controls and the strength of the hydraulics come together. It’s as if I become one with the machine”, he explains.

Echenberry left Namdeb in 2009 when he opted for a voluntary separation package the company offered its employees during the economic downturn. He then relocated to the Erongo region where he joined the Langer Heinrich Mine as a Multi-Skilled Operator.

His stint at the uranium mine lasted only seven months, however, and Echenberry soon move back to the

//Kharas region to join NAMPORT as a Mechanical Lifting Equipment Operator, at the Luderitz harbour. Soon, another opportunity arose at the Walvis Bay harbour. Echenberry applied and transferred back to Walvis Bay. He hasn’t looked back since.

Challenging Work

Crane Operators prepare and rig loads for lifting, and maintain and operate cranes - operating computerised controls and making use of ground-to-crane hand signals. To be a good crane operator you need to be responsible and patient, and Echenberry ticks all the boxes. “I like my job. When I’m in the crane booth, I’m on my own and I’m in control. But, you need to know what you’re doing”, he explains.

Containers are heavy and lifting them is dangerous work. Crane operators also need to have knowledge of safety rules that

govern cranes, such as regulations and safe working load limits for various cranes. They also need to have good hand-eye co-ordination. “I’m always proud when I’m done loading a container onto a truck trailer. Both the container and the truck may look big on the ground, but from where I’m sitting they look very small. It requires focus, concentration and a thorough knowledge and appreciation of your crane and its capabilities”, Echenberry notes.

Another key attribute that makes Echenberry to excel is his commitment to safety. “Safety is not negotiable. Operating heavy equipment and loads is dangerous work. I always make sure that I do all my risk assessments before getting into the crane. At NAMPORT, we all share in the objective to arrive at work healthy and to return home healthy”, he emphasises.

Solid Performer

NAMPORT has recognised Echenberry's track record of solid performance and now employs him as a Technical Trainer in its Learning and Development Department, becoming the company's very first Namibian Heavy Machinery instructor, a task that before was performed by foreign experts. "Although I started out with forklifts and reach-stackers, NAMPORT supported my growth in becoming a Category 1 Operator that could operate the Harbour Crane. It is now upon me to share my knowledge and skills with our newcomers", he says.

"I'm very proud that my employer can now capitalise on my competencies. Because, I can provide in-house training, the company doesn't have to pay external service providers to do so. I contribute to making the company more effective and efficient, and more profitable", he adds.

Lifelong Learner

Hard work, commitment and passion have made Echenberry a key link in the NAMPORT value chain. He remains unassuming and down-to-earth, however, and appreciates that his experience can inspire other young Namibians, to also consider this career path. "You never stop learning. I'm in my forties, but I also still attend courses to keep up to date with changes

in the industry, health and safety regulations and crane technology. In fact, I plan to stay at NAMPORT and I see myself as an Operations Supervisor or a Training Manager, in the near future", he adds.

Given his stellar career growth, Echenberry is sure to achieve the targets he sets for himself. "It's all about attitude. Set ambitious targets for yourself and do everything in your power to work towards those targets. Learn to prioritise and learn to solve problems", he shares. "In whatever you do, demonstrate commitment,

focus and passion. If you can do that, you can achieve anything in life", he adds.

Echenberry Hamata – Committed, focused and passionate. His journey has been one of continuous effort and struggle, but also one of growth and achievement. His story teaches us that often, it's not about becoming a new person, but becoming the person you were meant to be, and already are, but don't know how to be.

Learn to prioritise and learn to solve problems.
In whatever you do, demonstrate commitment,
focus and passion. If you can do that, you can
achieve anything in life.

”



**What does it
take to become a
Crane Operator?**



Crane Operators use cranes to move objects such as materials on construction sites, containers on wharves and heavy parts in factories. Operators usually specialise in particular types of cranes, such as truck loader and tower cranes that move objects on construction sites; container, ships and straddle cranes that move containers on wharves; mobile, non-slewing articulated and gantry cranes that shift heavy parts in factories; crawler, mobile and tower cranes that place concrete and build bridges; and gantry cranes involved in steel fabrication. Operating different cranes can be a totally different experience every time, but the principles are the same. You have to know your angles and weights and you have to know the capabilities of the crane, its chains, and of what you're lifting.

Skills and Knowledge

Crane operators need to have knowledge of safety rules that govern cranes, such as regulations for road operations and safe working load limits for various cranes. They also need to have knowledge about how to prepare and rig loads for lifting, how to maintain and operate cranes, including operating computerised controls, and ground-to-crane hand signals. To be a good crane operator you need to be responsible, patient and have good hand-eye co-ordination. Crane Operators need to be reasonably fit, have good eyesight and good hearing, and be comfortable working at heights.

Training

Most Crane Operators are trained on the job to build up skills and knowledge of cranes, including how to assemble and load cranes, and communicate with crane operators. They work under qualified operators to learn how to erect and operate specific cranes, signal crane operators and use the tools and equipment of the trade. Useful experience for prospective crane operators includes working as a dogman on the ground below a crane, attaching loads and communicating with the crane operator; building or engineering work; truck driving; and operating earthmoving or other heavy machinery. Mobile Crane Operators must also hold the appropriate heavy vehicle licence, which varies depending on the size of the crane. Seasoned operators often attend courses to keep up to date with changes in the construction industry, health and safety regulations and crane technology.

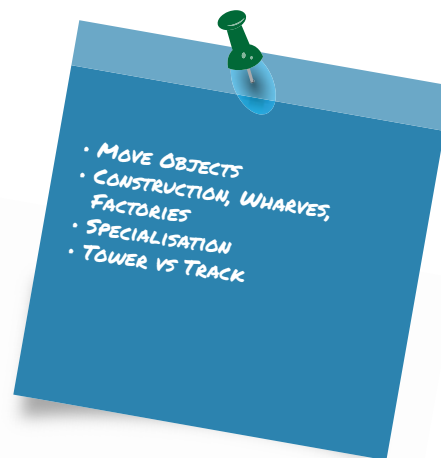
Working Conditions

Crane Operators often work irregular hours, including nights and weekends. They work in various locations outdoors or inside, including construction sites, warehouses and wharves, and in most weather conditions, except high winds and

heavy rain. Tower Crane Operators work at great heights.

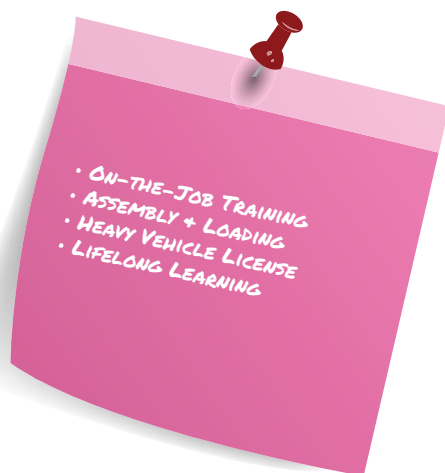
Job Prospects

Most Crane Operators work for employers in the construction and logistics sectors. They are also employed in the manufacturing; engineering and civil construction; machinery equipment hire and leasing; and forestry sectors. Some Crane Operators may progress to become training assessors, supervisors or managers.



Perhaps, it's the torque of the engines and how the intricate controls and the strength of the hydraulics come together. It's as if I become one with the machine.

”



LIVE YOUR PASSION

17

Ruusa Emvuula

Boilermaker

From Welder to Draughtswoman

Boilermakers produce steel fabrications from plates and tubes. The name originated from craftsmen who would fabricate boilers. Other than manufacturing and installing boiler systems, they also need to test and inspect such systems for defects and replace broken valves, pipes, or joints, using hand and power tools, gas torches, and welding equipment.

Meet 26-year old Ruusa Emvuula, a skilled Boilermaker - employed by diamond mining giant, Namdeb - as a Draughtswoman at its Southern Coastal Mines Plant at Oranjemund. This is her story.

Early Responsibility

Ruusa Emvuula grew up at

the Ehafo-Eheke village, near Ondangwa in Ohangwena. Since her father was working in Walvis Bay, Ruusa's paternal grandmother raised her and her seven siblings.

As the eldest, Ruusa had to - from a very young age - share in the responsibility of looking after her brothers and sisters. "I was taught responsibility from an early age. My grandmother was strict and raised all of us in such a way, that we would be able to survive on our own, even when she is not around. She often reminded me that my younger siblings were looking up to me and that I had to be an example to them", she recalls.

"Village life was good and I remain a simple village girl", she says.





Parental Encouragement

After completing Grade 12 at the Andimba Toivo ya Toivo Senior Secondary School at Ondangwa, Ruusa went to stay with her father at Walvis Bay, where she was awaiting the release of the Grade 12 results.

However, her father, it seemed, had already decided what his daughter was going to do with her life. “My dad had one thing on his mind, and that was that I should enroll for Boilermaking at the Namibia Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT), at Arandis. In fact, he was so enthusiastic about it, that he pushed me to apply, even before the Grade 12 results were released”, Ruusa shares. “I guess he was inspired by other NIMT graduates who have achieved career success. He just wanted the same for his daughter”, she adds.

Although Ruusa harboured dreams of further studies at the

then Polytechnic of Namibia, an E-symbol she obtained in English would’ve hampered her application. “I was disappointed, but in hindsight, I guess it made my decision easier. And in any case, my father was insisting that I enroll at NIMT”, she recalls.

Exciting Training

Boilermakers use blueprints to determine locations, positions, or dimensions of parts and install premade boilers into buildings and manufacturing facilities. Those who wish to enroll for training need to possess strong three-dimensional visualisation skills.

Despite it being a physically-demanding training environment, Ruusa excelled in her Boilermaking training, especially in the area of blueprint interpretation and sketching. “I really enjoyed the drawing and sketching part of the training course. I’ve always enjoyed drawing and I used to get hidings

from my grandmother, because I would draw on anything and everything”, she notes. “While at NIMT, I would always pass my drawing practical tests with distinctions, and I would also give tutorials to some of my friends who were struggling a bit”, she adds.

World of Work

After completing her Level 3 Boilermaking training at NIMT, Ruusa enrolled for further studies in South Africa. Today, Ruusa’s early childhood fascination with drawing is standing her in good stead with her employer - local diamond mining company, Namdeb - where she started out as a Boilermaker, but is now occupying a position as a Junior Draughtswoman.

“I believe I’m excelling as a Draughtswoman, because I’m a Boilermaker, first and foremost. It’s simple really - for you to fabricate something, you need a drawing to be able to appreciate three-dimensionally, what it is that you need to manufacture”, she explains.

“My background and experience in the Boilermaker field helps me draw accurately”, she adds.

Valuable Team Member

Boilermakers are highly skilled artisans who can branch out into similar occupations, such as pipefitters, millwrights, sheet metal workers, or welder, because much of the core training of those occupations is similar to that of boilermakers.

Ruusa has opted for draughting and she is living up to expectations. “My background in boilermaking gives me an edge in producing drawings and blueprints that my boilermaking colleagues find easy to interpret. My supervisors and team members appreciate me as an enthusiastic and committed team player, because they know that they can always rely on me for the best quality and workmanship”, Ruusa shares.

“Not all draughtsmen understand the intricacies of welding and metal fabrication that well. Having worked as a Boilermaker puts me in an ideal position to make key recommendations on the welding maps, the type of welding to be used, and at which area, and angles. As the Draughtswoman, I need to make the job easier for the Boilermaker”, she adds.

Life long Learner

Her infectious passion for her work in a team committed to quality and service will surely continue to open doors for Ruusa at Namdeb, a company solidifying its reputation as a leading equal opportunity employer, that creates opportunities for young women to grow and excel in technical occupational areas, traditionally dominated by men.

Ruusa also dreams of further studies in solidifying her growing reputation as a trailblazer for young Namibian women, wishing to enter technical and vocational careers.

“I have dreams of further studies in Project Engineering. And I believe that my experience in boilermaking and draughting is going to make it easier for me, when I enroll”, she says. “I’m still young and I can still study for the next ten years”, she shares.

Although she initially found the

going tough in keeping touch with her fiancée who works in the capital, Windhoek, Ruusa has come to enjoy the peace and tranquility of Oranjemund. The couple plans to marry soon. “I enjoy Oranjemund’s peace and tranquility. It’s safe and quiet and I can sleep with an open window without fear. Although I sometimes miss my fiancée, we’ve adapted well. We coordinate our leave and make time for each other”, she says.

Ruusa Emvula – Driven, determined, focused and resolute. In her unique and gentle trailblazing way, she is shaking up a world dominated by men. Her story teaches us that success comes to those who have faith in their ability and who make work of translating

that ability into results. Her passion for what she does inspires others to also strive for the best they can be.

She is living her passion as a Boilermaker. And she believes that other young women can do the same.

While at NIMT, I would always pass my drawing practical tests with distinctions, and I would also give tutorials to some of my friends who were struggling a bit.





**What does it
take to become a
Boilermaker?**



Boilermakers make and install boilers and other large containers that house gases or liquids such as oil. Job duties include reading blueprints, casting pieces and bending them into shape, and welding or bolting pieces together. Boilermakers also test completed boilers and perform routine maintenance. They often upgrade boilers to meet environmental standards and increase their efficiency. Boilermakers can work for refineries or construction or natural resource companies, or they can find careers as metal fabricators or power or water plant operators. Some install the huge pipes used in dams to send water to and from hydroelectric power generation turbines.

Skills and Knowledge

Boilermakers need to construct, assemble, maintain, and repair stationary steam boilers and boiler house auxiliaries. Align structures or plate sections to assemble boiler frame tanks or vats, following blueprints. Work involves use of hand and power tools, plumb bobs, levels, wedges, dogs, or turnbuckles. Assist in testing assembled vessels. Direct cleaning of boilers and boiler furnaces. Inspect and repair boiler fittings, such as safety valves, regulators, automatic-control mechanisms, water columns, and auxiliary machines. Boilermakers also need strong mechanical skills as they use and maintain a large variety of equipment, such as hoists and welding machines. They must also have high endurance because they spend many hours on their feet while lifting heavy boiler components. Boilermakers often

work inside boilers and vats, so they cannot be claustrophobic. They should also not be afraid of heights, as they sometimes may need to weld tanks several stories above the ground.

Training

People who have welding training or a welding certificate should have the best opportunities to be selected for boilermaker apprenticeship programs. Training programmes at registered institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Useful school subjects to secure enrollment include Mathematics and Science. During training, apprentices learn about metals and installation techniques, as well as, blueprint reading and sketching, general construction techniques and safety practices. On the job, they learn how to signal crane operators and use the tools and equipment of the trade. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods.

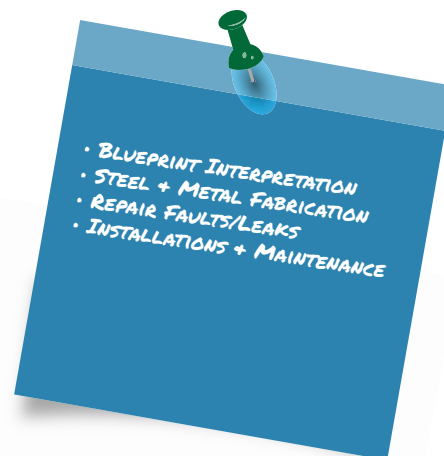
Working Conditions

Nearly all boilermakers work full -time and may experience extended periods of overtime when equipment is shut down for maintenance. Overtime work also may be necessary to meet construction or production deadlines. Boilermakers often use potentially dangerous equipment, such as acetylene torches and power grinders, handle heavy parts, and work on ladders or on top of large vessels. Work is physically demanding and may be done in cramped quarters inside boilers, vats, or tanks that are often

damp and poorly ventilated

Job Prospects

The demand for Boilermakers has increased largely because of growth in the local mining, manufacturing and construction sectors. As with many other construction workers, employment of boilermakers is sensitive to fluctuations of the economy. Nonetheless, maintenance and repair of boilers must continue even during economic downturns, so boilermaker mechanics in manufacturing and other industries generally have more stable employment than those in construction. While boilers typically last more than 50 years, the need to replace parts, such as boiler tubes, heating elements, and ductwork, is an ongoing process that will require the work of boilermakers. Some boilermakers may opt for similar occupations, such as draughtsman, pipefitters, millwrights, sheet metal workers, or welders. Much of the core training of those occupations is similar to that of boilermakers.



Having worked as a Boilermaker, I can make key recommendations on the welding maps, the type of welding to be used, and at which area, and angles. As the Draughtswoman, I need to make the job easier for the Boilermaker.

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LIVE YOUR PASSION

18

Edmund Shipulwa

Tour Guide

Passionate About Nature

Tour guides work in the travel industry, giving guided tours to groups of visitors and offering interesting or enlightening information about points of interest at nature attractions, historic sites, museums, scenic locations, and other travel destinations.

Meet 33-year old Edmund Shipulwa, Park Control Warden at the 100-thousand hectare Gondwana Canyon Park. Edmund is also a seasoned tour guide. This is his story.

Nature Lover

Edmund Shipulwa was born at Oshikuyo, outside Oshakati as the seventh of ten children. However, he went to stay with his uncle at Ruacana, when he turned three.

Edmond had a relatively carefree childhood, and from an early age, developed a love for farming and the outdoors. “Despite the fact that we had to walk about 15 kilometres to school everyday, I considered myself fortunate, because the early and long walk allowed me to spend the first part of my day outside, taking in the sunrise and the fresh air, and appreciating the scenery”, he explains. “I enjoyed village life. From school, we would do our chores which included looking after our livestock and ploughing our mahangu fields”, he adds.

Stellar Growth

Edmund’s story is one of persistence and growth. After completing his Grade 12 at Ruacana





Senior Secondary, he moved to southern Namibia and landed a job at the Gondwana Canyon Park, as a Field Assistant. His loyal service to the company has since seen him moving up the ranks from a Tour Guide to Ranger, to Senior Ranger, to Assistant Warden, and to the position he currently holds as Control Park Warden.

“My employment at Gondwana Collection has really been a match made in heaven. Yes, the company recognised my potential and willingness to learn and improve myself early on, and created opportunities for me to grow in this field”, he notes. “I really started from scratch. I had no qualifications when I joined. But, I was willing to work hard and invest in my own future. My hard work and sacrifices have paid off”, he highlights.

Employer Support

Edmond recognised the role his supervisors and the owners of

Gondwana Collection played in his remarkable career progression. Under their tutelage and encouragement, he soon applied for the position of Control Warden, responsible for overseeing and managing the tourist infrastructure and game resources in the park.

“I got some encouragement from the previous warden and from our then Managing Director, Manni Goldbeck, who said they would give me a week to think about falling under new management, or applying for the vacant Control Warden position. I applied eventually, and was selected as the new Gondwana Canyon Park Control Warden”, he recalls.

Asked as to what he thought landed him the job, Edmond confidently responds that those making the decision could not overlook his solid track record of loyal performance, commitment and hard work. “I think what pulled it through for me was the

experience I have amassed over the years and the fact that I had a thorough grounding in all aspects of our tourism operations. I grew up with Gondwana Collection”, he adds.

Demanding Work

Edmond knows the scenic Fish River Canyon like the back of his hand and has the ability to expertly engage visitors with his knowledge of the location. He finds interacting with tourists to teach them about the park’s fauna and flora extremely gratifying and rewarding. “We have three lodges in our property, Canyon Roadhouse, Canyon Village and Canyon Lodge. We offer a wide range of activities to keep our guests busy, including driving them to the canyon and walking them along the edge and cliffs of the second largest canyon in the world and the largest in Africa. We also offer guided game drives and walking trails”, he explains.

However, Edmond admits that at times, overseeing all tourist operations in the 100-thousand hectare nature park, can be very demanding, “It gets hectic at times. We need to maintain our waterholes in this very dry and arid part of the country. We also do maintenance on our fences, while also installing and monitoring camera traps, which is a source of information for game counts, field management and research”, he notes.

Conservation

Edmond’s expert knowledge of this surroundings makes him an expert tour guide. For him, it’s not only about educating others about our country’s rich and unique natural heritage, but also about conserving our natural habitat for generations to come.

“At Gondwana Collection, we are very serious about conservation.

When we started this park, there were only three zebras, but now we speak of thousands of them. We have reintroduced several game species including giraffe, red hartebeest and blue wildebeest and we still have a lot planned for this beautiful Nama Karoo Desert”, he shares. “We are reaping the rewards, as our reintroduction of game species is attracting other species as well. Just recently, we detected from our camera traps that a brown spotted hyena has entered the park. I have monitored the traps for the past ten years and it was our first time to see this hyena”, he highlights.

Edmund is also playing an important role in a nursery project by the company to grow Quiver Tree seedlings. “We’ve detected that the numbers of this special tree are dwindling and that we could not find small any quiver trees. We were worried that if the big quivers died, we would lose the entire species. It’s an exciting project”, he shares.

Growing Sector

The local tourism sector is growing and opportunities for employment at tour companies are readily available, who may employ guides on a seasonal, full-time, part-time or volunteer basis. Edmund feels that Namibia with its scenic landscapes has much more to offer, not only to tourists, but also to young men and women who wish to enter this

rewarding and potentially lucrative sector.

“I believe that my journey of personal growth and development at Gondwana can serve as an inspiration to many young people out there, that a future in the Tourism and Hospitality sector is indeed viable. Failing Grade 12 and not being able to go to university is not the end of the world. If you appreciate interacting with people and serving them in a resourceful and committed way, you too can excel in this sector”, Edmund highlights. “I love the outdoors. I

love nature. And I have turned this passion of mine into a job I love and enjoy. Others can do the same. Tourism and Hospitality is the way to go”, he adds.

Edmund Shipulwa – Humble, reliable, organised and committed. An ardent conservationist who has managed to turn his passion for nature and the outdoors into a viable career path. His story teaches us that passion is what gives meaning to our lives. It’s what allows us to achieve success

beyond our wildest imagination. And that it is within all of us to find a career path that we have a passion for.

He is living his passion as a Tour Guide.

I love the outdoors. I love nature. And I have turned this passion of mine into a job I love and enjoy. Others can do the same. Tourism and Hospitality is the way to go.

”



**What does it
take to become a
Tour Guide?**



Tour guides work in the travel industry, giving guided tours to groups of visitors. They are experts on the history of the location and offer their tour groups interesting or enlightening information about points of interest at nature attractions, historic sites, museums, scenic locations, and other travel destinations. Guides may give walking tours, bus tours, or even lead river tours on a boat. Often hired by visitors' bureaus or travel companies, tour guides are typically residents of the region in which they give tours.

Skills and Knowledge

To be successful as a tour guide, you must be an extrovert and able to create a fun, friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere for tourists from all walks of life. Speaking loudly and clearly and demonstrating patience with people who are in unfamiliar surroundings are other key traits. Effective communication skills are absolutely essential and being able to speak and/or understand multiple languages is considered an asset. In addition, tour guides must be highly organised, punctual, and ethical. They need to have exceptional time-management skills and be able to thoroughly research pertinent information.

Training

Training programmes at registered training institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Useful school subjects to secure enrollment include English and other languages and Science. Typically, training courses enables participants to gain skills in all aspects of tour guiding, including specific knowledge of the area or establishment being toured, local cultural information and safety

training. You will be assessed to show that you have achieved the skills and knowledge required by the course. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods.

Working Conditions

Tour guides work in a variety of environments and conditions. Nature tour guides work outside and are subject to the effects of climate and weather conditions, while museum tour guides work indoors year-round. Typically, a tour guide's workweek is very structured, though they may work more or less than 40 hours. Often tour guides lead tours on weekends. Some guides are employed for seasonal and temporary positions, working only during the months when tourism is at its peak.

Job Prospects

The local tourism sector is growing and opportunities for employment at tour companies are readily available, who may employ guides on a seasonal, full-time, part-time or volunteer basis. Other potential employers include wildlife parks, museums and cruise ships. Many tour guides are self-employed and usually give tours of publicly accessible travel destinations like national parks or nature attractions. Nature tours are very popular in Namibia with its scenic landscapes. Most local guides lead groups to natural attractions, national parks, and other outdoor locations, where wildlife and scenic locations are the focus of the tour. These guides are experts in the natural sciences and have the ability to engage visitors with their knowledge of the location.

- 
- LEADING GUIDED TOURS
 - WELL-INFORMED
 - SHARE DESTINATION INFORMATION
 - NATURE ATTRACTIONS + HISTORIC SITES

- 
- EXTROVERT
 - GOOD COMMUNICATOR
 - TIME MANAGEMENT
 - MULTI-LINGUAL

- 
- THEORY + PRACTICE
 - COMMUNICATION
 - CULTURAL AWARENESS
 - LIFELONG LEARNING

I really started from scratch. I had no qualifications when I joined. But, I was willing to work hard and invest in my own future. My hard work and sacrifices have paid off.”

- 
- STRUCTURED WORKWEEK
 - OUTDOORS
 - WEEKEND WORK
 - SEASONAL WORK

- 
- INCREASING DEMAND
 - GROWING SECTOR
 - SELF-EMPLOYMENT
 - NATURE + ECO-TOURISM

LIVE YOUR PASSION

19

Ian Simaata

Bricklayer

From Skilled Artisan to Budding Entrepreneur

If you think all a bricklayer does is lay brick upon brick and plaster walls – then think again! There's more to being a bricklayer than meets the eye. In fact, a single bricklaying project calls upon a variety of skills.

Meet 40-year old Ian Simaata, a qualified and skilled bricklayer, who employs himself and others through taking on small to medium construction projects in the Zambezi region. This is his story.

Village Boy

Ian Simaata was born at Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi region, into a family of eight children. He attended the Silumbi Primary School until

Grade 7, but when his father passed away in 2000, Ian transferred to the Nakundu area, where he completed Grade 12 at the Sandji Senior Secondary School.

Growing up as an orphan, Ian's grandparents, who took up custody of the children, had to work hard to make ends meet. “ My grandparents raised us at the village, where I did not really have rolemodels to aspire to and look up to. My siblings and I were just simple village children, who tried to help out and assist where we could, in making ends meet ”, he shares.

Although he passed Grade 12 with good grades, financial difficulties discouraged Ian from seeking study opportunities. He could also not afford to sit around idle and had no choice but to start looking for work.





Job Hunting

Although he never demonstrated any interest in bricklaying, Ian, in his job search, ended up at a local construction site, where he would from time to time land opportunities to work as a henchman. “Growing up at the village, I never saw bricklayers do what they do; I only saw the completed buildings and knew that this building was a classroom and that one a shop”, he recalls. As a henchman to experienced and skilled bricklayers, Ian realised that he not only enjoyed the hard labour, but that he could actually see himself becoming a skilled artisan, too. “Thinking back, working as a henchman opened my eyes to the construction industry and the potential out there to offer your skills to construction employers and projects”, he adds.

Exciting Training

Ian decided to enroll at the Zambezi Vocational Training Centre at Katima Mulilo. Although, at the time, he also entertained the option of enrolling for a course in Plumbing, Ian ended up registering for a three-year training course in Bricklaying.

From the onset, Ian decided that he had to remain focused on his training. “I told myself to refrain from drinking alcohol, doing drugs and smoking. I saw the effects of peer pressure on many of my classmates who couldn’t handle temptation. When we started the course, we were fourteen, but upon graduation only four of us successfully graduated”, he says. “Bricklaying is a demanding course. What pulled me through was sheer discipline and commitment”, he adds.

World of Work

Upon graduation, Ian started offering his skills to construction companies involved in the Zambezi Waterfront Development at Katima Mulilo, with one goal in mind – To gain enough practical experience in all areas of construction to allow him to venture into the sector as an independent contractor.

“I always knew that I could do better on my own. Bricklayers are the bosses of the construction industry. We employ everyone, be it an electrician or a plumber. It is really the leading occupation in the construction field. Already at Level 2 in your training, you can start to work and earn an income. With other trades, you need to complete your full course to be taken in by companies”, he notes. “But, you need to put in the hard labour and the overtime. If you pour concrete late in the afternoon to meet a deadline, you need to be willing to put in the extra hours to wait

until its settled to finish off”, he adds.

Budding Entrepreneur

Today, Ian is excelling as an independent subcontractor, who takes on small to medium construction projects, in and around Katima Mulilo. Landing contracts to keep his company afloat often proves challenging. Since he is yet to acquire his own heavy tools and equipment, Ian has no option but to rent these from tool hire companies. But, he remains committed to the cause.

Driven by an intense desire to succeed and the realization that others depend on him for their livelihoods, this father of four appreciates that his reputation as a contractor in a very competitive industry will always be his biggest asset.

“I don’t have these assets now. It’s also difficult sometimes when I have to decline opportunities outside of town, because I don’t have my own vehicle. But my reputation will always be my biggest asset. As such, I make sure that every project we complete is a project of high quality”, he emphasises. “As a small to medium business enterprise in this sector, you need to be flexible as you grow. I can get a call now to put in tiles or paint a building and as an entrepreneur, I need to be ready”, he adds.

VET Advocate

Ian’s experience of the construction sector has also made him a passionate advocate for technical and vocational careers. Whenever he has the opportunity, he encourages the youth to consider technical and vocational career options.

“The negative perception out there discourages school learners to consider technical and vocational careers. I don’t understand why, because there are options that take you off the streets. Whenever I have the opportunity, I encourage young people, especially at the village, to consider these careers and to enroll at vocational training centres, like Zambezi VTC”, he highlights.

For now, Ian is focused on landing more contracts and growing his business. He appreciates that

while he still has some way to go in positioning his business as a force to be reckoned with, that by making the sacrifices and dealing with the challenges, he can and will succeed.

“Hardship has taught me to be responsible. Once you become a parent or when you get married, you truly understand the true meaning of responsibility and that you can’t afford to sit idle”, he notes.

Away from the construction sites, Ian enjoys spending time with his

family. His wife, Liz supports him in his endeavour to grow his venture through the rendering of high quality construction services.

Ian Simaata – A driven and spirited young man whose zest for life and what he does inspires those around him to always do their best. His story teaches us that success comes with sacrifice. That without sacrifice, success is impossible. However, for Ian his success is not sacrifice at all, because he loves what he is doing. His passion for

what he does and his desire to work for himself has brought him success. He leads by example and inspires others to also strive for the best they can be.

He is living his passion as a Bricklayer.

I don’t have my own vehicle. But my reputation will always be biggest asset. As such, I make sure that every project we complete is a project of high quality.

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Bricklayers lay bricks, concrete blocks and tiles to construct or repair buildings, walls, arches, chimneys or paved areas. However, if you think all a bricklayer does is lay brick upon brick and plasters walls – then think again! There's more to being a bricklayer than meets the eye. In fact, a single bricklaying project calls upon a variety of skills, including, reading and working from plans and specifications; sealing foundations with damp-resistant materials; spreading layers of mortar to serve as a base and binder for bricks in rows, designs or shapes; and spreading mortar between joints; repairing and maintaining clay bricks, cement blocks and related structures; operating brick cutting machines; and erecting scaffolding.

Skills and Knowledge

Bricklayers need to have knowledge of bricklaying methods, materials and tools; the ability to interpret building plans and drawings; skill in laying bricks, blocks or tiles; basic carpentry and maths skills; knowledge of decorating styles; and knowledge of health and safety requirements. Bricklayers who are self-employed also need small business skills. Bricklayers need to be accurate, motivated, able to work to strict deadlines, able to work well independently and as part of a team, comfortable working at heights and in confined spaces, and good communicators.

Training

People who have experience in industrial, interior or landscape design, construction site laboring, and any other work in the building construction industry should have the best opportunities to be selected

for bricklaying training programmes. Training programmes at registered institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods.

Working Conditions

Bricklayers often work long hours, including early mornings, evenings and weekends; work outside on construction sites and inside buildings, in conditions that may be noisy and dirty; and travel locally to building sites. Some bricklayers work at great heights. Bricklayers must be fit and healthy, with strong arms and a strong back, as they are often bending and lifting. If they have skin conditions that are affected by concrete mix, they need to be able to manage this.

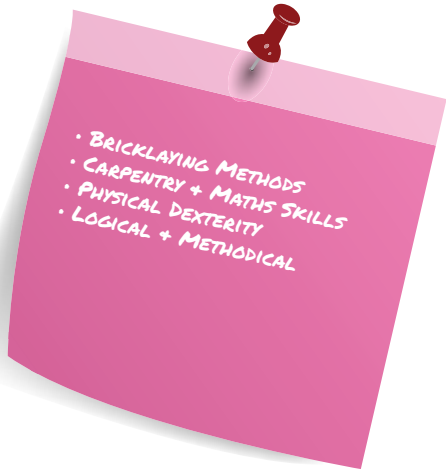
Job Prospects

Chances of getting a job as a bricklayer are good due to a current construction boom. However, like many building jobs, this role can be affected by economic conditions and a downturn in the economy can lower the demand for bricklayers. Many graduates become building contractors, running their own businesses and planning, supervising and working on the construction and alteration of buildings. Others opt for specialisation such as stonemasons, who work with stone to construct or renovate buildings, fittings, walls and paving, or to create monuments in cemeteries; and concrete workers who make, pour, spread and finish, reinforce and cut

concrete for buildings, stairs, footpaths, driveways and bridges.

- 
- CONSTRUCTION
 - BRICKS, BLOCKS + TILES
 - REPAIR + RESTORE
 - PLAN INTERPRETATION

- 
- CONSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE
 - THEORY + PRACTICE
 - LIFELONG LEARNING
 - CAREER PROGRESSION

- 
- BRICKLAYING METHODS
 - CARPENTRY + MATHS SKILLS
 - PHYSICAL DEXTERITY
 - LOGICAL + METHODICAL

Bricklayers are the bosses of the construction industry. We employ everyone, be it an electrician or a plumber. It is really the leading occupation in the construction field.

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- 
- OUTDOORS
 - NOISY + DIRTY
 - CONFINED SPACES + HEIGHTS
 - SAFETY CONSCIOUS

- 
- CONSTRUCTION BOOM
 - HOUSING, CIVIL + MINING SECTORS
 - SELF-EMPLOYMENT
 - SIMILAR SPECIALISED OCCUPATIONS

LIVE YOUR PASSION

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Sophia Muyenga

Office Administrator

Excelling in a Demanding Work Environment

Office Administrators perform a variety of administrative and management tasks to ensure smooth and efficient office operations. Employed by all types of organisations, they often work as receptionists, and as a result, are often considered the face of a business. Meet 29-year old Sophia Muyenga, a qualified Office Administrator, employed by the Kavango-East Regional Council as a Private Secretary to the Governor. This is her story.

Village Girl

Sophia Muyenga was born at Katjinakatji village, outside Rundu in the Kavango-East region. She attended Rundu Junior Primary

School, while her parents were staying at the nearby Ndama village. Growing up wasn't easy, as Sophia's parents were unemployed. "Life was tough. My parents weren't employed and we struggled to make ends meet", she recalls. From a very young age, Sophia harboured dreams of becoming a nurse. "I guess I'm just a caring human being. I just love helping others, especially those in need of care and nourishment. However, things changed later on at school when I realised that I would also love to work in an office environment one day. I wanted to become an Office Administrator", she explains.

Training Decision

Sophia excelled at school and following a two-year stint at the



Dr. Romas Kampungu High School, she later returned to the regional capital, where she completed Grade 12 at the Rundu Secondary School. Confronted with the reality that she didn't have the financial means to enroll for training in Office Administration, it was Sophia's sister who came to her rescue and who applied on her behalf at the Rundu Vocational Training Centre. "My sister submitted an application for Office Administration and Rundu VTC and I was accepted. It wasn't easy though, because my application for a loan to pay for my training was rejected.", she shares.

However, Sophia persisted. And with the help and assistance of family, she made the best of the opportunity by investing all her time and energy into her training, graduating with a Level 3 Office Administration certification in 2007.

Job Hunting

Struggling to land an employment opportunity, it was Sophia's Office Administration Instructor, Suzette von Wielligh, who remembered her as a diligent and responsible trainee, and decided to take her in at her husband's company, Sparks Enterprise. Sophia grabbed the opportunity to gain practical work experience with both hands. Soon thereafter, a colleague informed her about a vacancy at the Regional Council for a Private Secretary to the Governor. Despite her lack of practical experience, Sophia decided to apply and she hasn't looked back since. Today, her warm personality and efficient administration skills make her an asset to the Kavango-East Regional Council. "To excel in this line of work, you need to have faith in you own ability and you need to add value to work of others. I had an excellent working relationship with the late

Governor, Maurus Nekaro, until he sadly passed away in 2013. And I believe that it was my good track record in managing this office that resulted in me being recommended to continue in this capacity, when the current Governor, Dr. Samuel Mbambo, came on board", she shares.

Demanding Work

As the name implies, Office Administrators manage appointments, keep meeting room booking registers, keep the front desk tidy and provide administrative support.

Sophia excels in this environment. She is fast and efficient, detail-oriented, able to prioritise tasks, and able to work autonomously. Her communication skills, outgoing personality, professionalism and positive 'can -do' attitude, make her an asset to the Regional Council. Kavango-East Governor, Dr. Samuel Mbambo summarises her role and

contribution aptly, when he says, "without Sophia, the office is lost".

"If you think that as administrators we just sit around and answer calls, you're mistaken. We've lots to do - Make sure the office space is neat and tidy, make bookings, order supplies and receive and interact with visitors. And you need to do all of this with a big smile. You are the face of the office, you need to be presentable", Sophia explains.

Balancing Act

Sophia's drive to succeed has brought her success.

As a single mother, she appreciates the need to strike a healthy balance between the demands of managing the office and spending quality time with her loved ones, who supports her in her work.

"Juggling the demands of the office with that of being a single mother

is not easy. But, I've always been a hard working woman, and I'm able to manage because of the support I get from my first-born who is now old enough to attend to his little sister when I'm late from work. My siblings, especially my sister Christine, also help when I have to work late, or if I have to travel with work", she says.

Future Plans

Sophia's journey has been one of steady progress, very much based on her faith in her own ability, and her willingness to go the extra mile in serving others. A journey that started at the Rundu VTC, a training institution that has played a big role in empowering her, and many others, with work-relevant technical and vocational skills.

Sophia also believes in giving credit where it's due and recognises the important role the Rundu VTC has played in her success story. But, Private Secretary to the Governor is not the end destination for this driven and committed young woman. Being surrounded by political office bearers on a daily basis has brought a new dream.

"I work with regional and local political leaders on a daily basis and admire what they do in furthering the development of our communities. So, I've been thinking of perhaps joining the political domain, one day, and serve my people. In the meantime, I'll hone my skills in my current capacity and

In future, maybe I will join politics. I like it because I learn a lot from the politicians I deal with on a daily basis", she adds.

Sophia Muyenga – Humble and diplomatic. Driven and professional. Her story teaches us that the discipline you learn and character you build from setting and achieving a goal can be more valuable than the achievement of the goal itself. That success is about honest endeavour and persistent effort to do the best possible under any, and all circumstances. Her faith in her own

ability has brought her success.

She is an Office Administrator. She is living her passion!

To excel in this line of work, you need to have faith in you own ability and you need to add value to work of others.





**What does it
take to become
an Office
Administrator?**



Office Administrators perform a variety of administrative and management tasks to ensure that staff can work efficiently and effectively. Employed by all types of organisations, including large corporations, small businesses, non-profit organisations and governmental agencies, Office Administrators often work as Receptionists, and as a result, are often considered the face of a business.

Skills and Knowledge

To excel in an Office Administration career, you must have robust organisational skills, be fast and efficient, detail-oriented, able to prioritise tasks, and able to work autonomously, as well as part of a team. Highly developed communication skills and an outgoing personality are crucial as communicating with other members of staff is a major part of the role. Professional personal presentation and a vibrant, friendly disposition are highly favoured for this role. Employers also prefer administrators that are flexible and have a positive 'can do' attitude. Having strong knowledge and experience of various computer applications is also an important requirement. Excellent writing and numerical skills are also a must – and a fast typing speed doesn't go astray either.

Training

Training programmes at registered training institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. Typically, training courses enables participants to gain skills in aspects such as preparing, filing and archiving documents, sorting mail, telephone etiquette and general office tasks such

as data entry, arranging travel and managing stationery and other stock. You will be assessed to show that you have achieved the skills and knowledge required by the course. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods.

Working Conditions

As the name implies, Office Administrators work indoors in managing appointments, keep meeting room bookings registers, keeping the front desk tidy and providing administrative support. Often, administrators may also be required to organise and manage events for staff or external stakeholders, which may result in working at a venue outside of the office.

Job Prospects

Office Administration positions are amongst the most frequently advertised and highly sought-after jobs, providing job security, variety and responsibility, opportunities to work in diverse workplaces, and an excellent general training environment. Opportunities in Office Administration exist in every industry, from creative to corporate to non-for-profit organisations, as well as in small and large businesses.

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- ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS
 - KEY SUPPORT FUNCTION
 - ALL EMPLOYERS
 - CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 
- ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS
 - FLEXIBLE + 'CAN-DO'- ATTITUDE
 - TIME MANAGEMENT
 - DETAIL-ORIENTED

- 
- THEORY + PRACTICE
 - DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT
 - TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE
 - CUSTOMER SERVICE

You need to do all of this with a big smile.
You are the face of the office, you need to
be presentable. ”

- 
- STRUCTURED WORKWEEK
 - INDOORS
 - OFFICE-BOUND
 - EVENTS MANAGEMENT

- 
- GROWING DEMAND
 - JOB SECURITY
 - BUSINESS EXPOSURE
 - DIVERSE WORKPLACES

LIVE YOUR PASSION

22

Erica Gertze

Mining Truck Operator

Trailblazer for Women in the Mining Sector

Mining haul trucks are off-highway, rigid dump trucks, specifically engineered for use in high-production mining and heavy-duty construction environments. Made to carry extra heavy loads of ore, these trucks are huge. Capacities range from 36 to 496 tons and some trucks have up to three axles. Meet 38-year old Erica Gertze, employed by QKR Navachab Gold Mine, outside Karibib, as one of its open pit haul mining truck operators. This is her story.

Young Tomboy

Erica Gertze was born at Usakos in the Erongo region. Growing up on Farm Tubusis on the outskirts of the town.

As a young girl, Erica was a typical tomboy, who always engaged in games and activities physical in nature. In an attempt to rid her of her 'boyish' ways, Erica's parents enrolled her at a girl's hostel in 1992, while still at school. "I had a strict Christian upbringing. In fact, the only place I was allowed to visit was my grandparents' home", she recalls.

Erica obtained her Grade 12 certificate from the Swakopmund Secondary School in 1996. In the same year, her father landed a new job at Karibib, and the family relocated to the neighbouring town.

Life After School

As a young girl, Erica harboured dreams of qualifying as a pilot. However, despite her good grades, circumstances made enrolling for



further tertiary studies impossible. Erica obtained her driver's license and started job hunting, landing her first job at the Karibib Tourism Centre in 2001.

"I started out as a Bistro Assistant at a monthly salary of only three-hundred dollars and after only three months, I was promoted to Saleslady. I liked the job, because it gave me an opportunity to engage and interact with people from all walks of life", she shares.

However, the low wages often made Erica feel like she was in a dead-end street. But, she remained positive and her breakthrough came in 2008, when she applied for a Truck Operator vacancy at the Navachab gold mine, then under the management of Ashanti Gold. "The vacancy advert required that one should have Grade 12 and a driver's license. I applied and landed the opportunity"

Male-Dominated World

Hard work, determination and effort have since seen Erica rising through the ranks at QKR Navachab Gold, which has since taken over the mine from Ashanti. "At one point, we were four female Truck Operators at the mine. It's daunting work that requires a lot of sacrifice, especially if you're a woman. By 2010, I was the only female Truck Operator left at the mine", Erica notes.

In 2011, Erica approached her supervisor with a request for advanced loading tool operator training. Her request was granted and she was placed under the tutelage of a seasoned loading tool operator. "My mentor, Paulus Shikongo really took me under his wing. I was assessed and found competent, only three months into the training course, which opened the doors to bigger loading operator machines", she shares.

"Regardless of whether you are a male or female operator, it's challenging work. But, I draw inspiration from my own track record of competence, as I continue to grow and master bigger equipment. My male counterparts do not intimidate me at all. I'm a trailblazer - It is not only men who can do this job", Erica adds.

Team Member

Erica enjoys the full support of supervisors and team members, alike. Her male counterparts openly share their appreciation and admiration of Erica as a dedicated and focused individual who sets an example for other young men and women to follow.

Today, Erica is the only female operator at the mine qualified to operate the 992 front loader machine. Her drive to succeed continues to propel her to greater heights and she landed another

promotion, very recently. "Just a few weeks ago, an internal vacancy for the position of Supervisor for Truck Operators arose. I applied, was interviewed and came out as the successful candidate", she says. "In my new capacity, I am responsible for supervising the work of a team of twelve Truck Operators, which include male operators", Erica adds.

Taxing Work

Operating open pit haul trucks in a demanding mining production environment is physically taxing and requires dexterity, intense concentration and focus. Erica ticks all the boxes and leads by example. "Today, I am very proud to say that I am the first female and only Caterpillar 992 Wheel Loader Operator at Navachab. I feel strong and powerful behind the controls. I just love the feeling", she explains.

Erica also assigns a high premium

to occupational health and safety and expects her team members to do the same. "I never compromise on safety and I expect the same from my team. Our shifts are demanding; we don't break for lunch, because we have our lunch while working. The machines we operate are big and we have to be well rested and focused to be productive. We also have to drink a lot of water and stay hydrated so that we keep our kidneys healthy", she notes.

Future Plans

Away from the demands of the open pit, Erica - as a single mother of two - enjoys spending time with friends and family. Those close to her know her as a reliable, talented and caring individual, who is also very good at hairdressing.

However, for Erica, the sky is the limit and she has plans to grow further in this exciting career path. "I love working in this challenging mining sector. And I want to continue to grow and acquire more competencies to demonstrate to other young women out there that they too can make it in this exciting field", she concludes.

Erica Gertze. Talented, driven and focused. Humble, loyal and compassionate. Her story teaches us that positive thinking combined with positive action can result in

success; that the road to success is never easy to navigate, but with hard work, drive and passion, it's possible to achieve our dreams. Her persistence has paid off and has made her a trailblazer for young women wishing to enter the male-dominated mining world.

She is a Mining Truck Operator. She is living her passion!

My male counterparts do not intimidate me at all. I'm a trailblazer - It is not only men who can do this job.

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**What does it
take to become a
Mining Truck
Operator?**



Mining Truck Operators safely operate heavy equipment in mostly open pit or strip mining environments, which includes haul trucks, support equipment and loading units, to recover minerals from near the earth's surface. Typically, they operate equipment such as backhoes, large tractor and rubber-tired dozers and scrapers, electrical or mechanical drive haul trucks, graders and front-end loaders.

Skills and Knowledge

To excel in this career path, operators need good hand-eye co-ordination to effectively and safely operate large equipment. Other skills include good hearing and eyesight; good health with reasonable strength, agility and stamina; ability to judge distances and visualise three-dimensional layouts; and an ability to remain alert while performing repetitive tasks. They should enjoy operating heavy equipment and have strong organisational and problem solving skills.

Training

Training programmes at registered training institutions typically cover both theoretical and practical components. You will be assessed to show that you have achieved the skills and knowledge required. Assessment may include written, oral or practical assessment methods. Many companies provide on-the-job training that includes an orientation to mine operations and information about health and safety practices, hazardous waste handling, environmental reporting procedures and standard practices and procedures.

Working Conditions

Operators generally work shifts and must be able to sit for long periods of time with exposure to vibration and jarring. At mines in remote locations, operators may be away from home for two to three weeks at a time, living and working closely with their work colleagues. Safety precautions and personal protective equipment, such as safety boots, gloves, hard hats, glasses and hearing protection are required to reduce the risk of injury associated with working near or with machinery. The work also requires climbing, stooping, crouching and bending. Lifting heavy loads routinely may be required.

Job Prospects

Namibia has a robust and growing mining sector. Operators usually start as helpers, labourers or truck drivers. With experience and on-the-job training they may advance to larger or more complicated equipment and possibly to supervisory positions. Operators can also venture into the construction sector.



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- OPEN PIT / STRIP MINING
 - VARIETY OF MACHINES
 - HEALTH + SAFETY
 - MULTI-SKILLED

- 
- THEORY + PRACTICE
 - ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
 - MINING OPERATIONS ORIENTATION
 - HEALTH + SAFETY

- 
- HAND-EYE COORDINATION
 - STRENGTH + STAMINA
 - VISUALISATION SKILLS
 - ORGANISED

I am the first female and only Caterpillar 992 Wheel Loader Operator at Navachab. I feel strong and powerful behind the controls. I just love the feeling.

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- 
- SHIFTS
 - VIBRATION EXPOSURE
 - SAFETY PRECAUTIONS
 - LIFTING HEAVY LOADS

- 
- GROWING DEMAND
 - CAREER GROWTH
 - DIVERSE WORKPLACES
 - RELATED SECTORS

LIVE YOUR PASSION