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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.

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