



In the Zone



## Dollar for my Fees

**Established by the 2018 SRC's community development office, the campaign was founded to support students in need of financial aid at the institution.**

**ESTER KAMATI**

The community development office at the University of Namibia (Unam), under the capable leadership of the Student Representative Council (SRC), has been aiding students with funding through the 'Dollar for my Fees' campaign.

The campaign was launched in 2018 and collections were done for three consecutive months starting from August.

A total of N\$5 029 was raised. Ginola Nauseb, the current SRC member for finance at Unam, explained that the programme works in such a way that students donate one dollar or more, which is then put into a scheme that aids students in need to pay their outstanding tuition and transport fees, as well as for foodstuff. The initiative was established to aid students on campus who are from poor communities.

Although the money was initially collected to pay off the outstanding debt of students who could not sit for their exams, in the end it wasn't used for this purpose. This is because the vice-chancellor of the university made provision for these students to sit for their examinations regardless of what was owed.

The funds were then donated by the previous SRC member for community development, Julia Hauwanga, towards buying necessities for the students, which included sanitary pads and food.

The last portion was recently donated to San community students studying at the Ogongo campus in northern Namibia, according to the current SRC member for community development, Alexis Wimmerth.

The programme only ran for three months last year because of the long process of getting it approved was only finalised in

the middle of the year.

The SRC then had to raise awareness about the project to attract financial contributors. Getting things like the collection cans also took some time.

The project is in full swing this year with the first collection having been done on 15 March at the Unam main campus, as well as the Wernhil Park mall in the city centre. Wimmerth said the SRC wanted to get the community involved and thus took a trip to Wernhil to engage them and get their support for the project. The collections for this year took place on 15 March, as well as 20 and 31 April on the Unam campus.

Wimmerth said the community is responding well to the campaign.

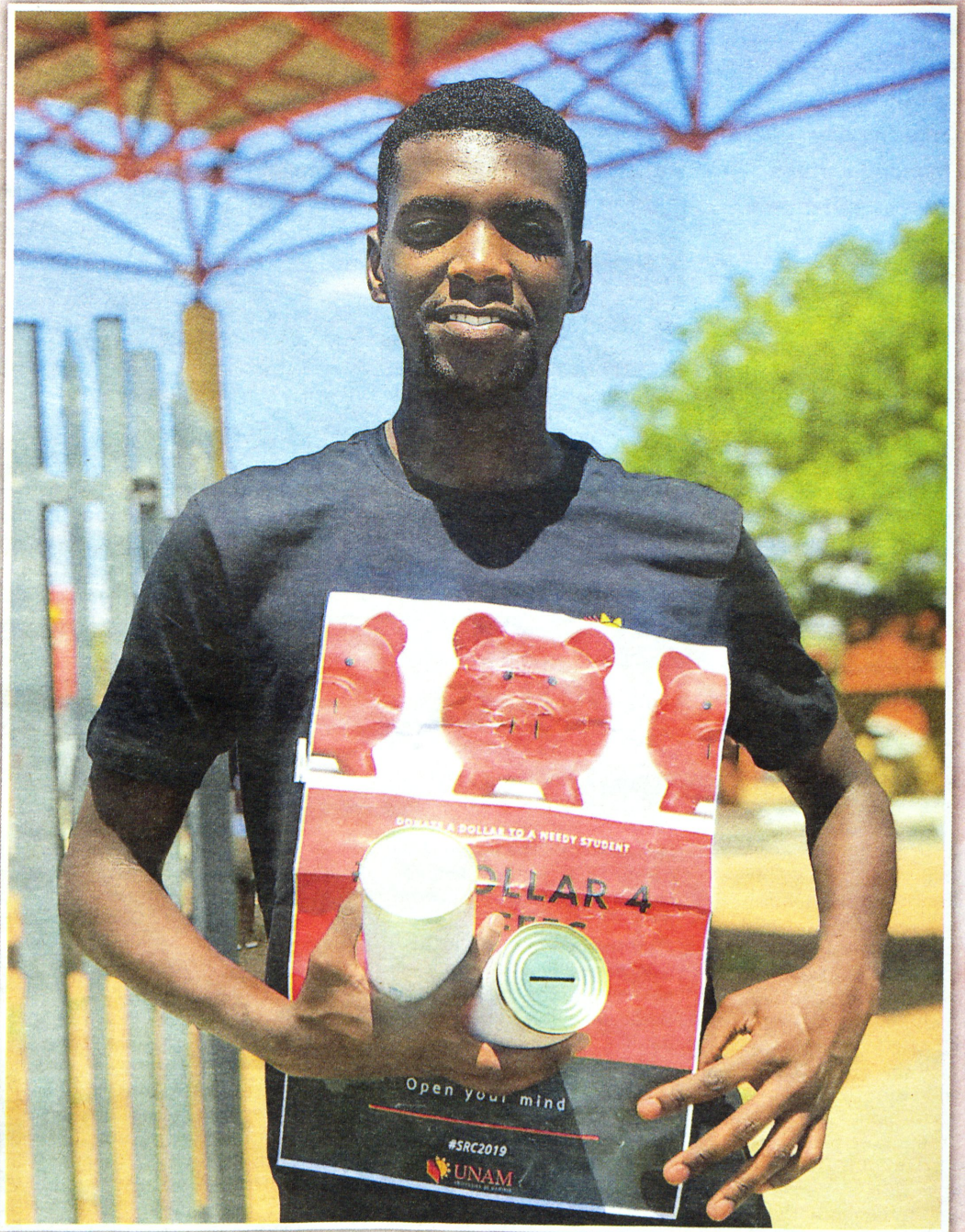
"During our collection at Wernhil, people would take us to the side and ask what it is actually about and they were very interested after we explained."

Wimmerth added that three companies called her and pledged to donate funds to the campaign; these included VisionCore Namibia, which is a women empowerment organisation.



The campaign also got some recognition from Hardap education director Mzingisi Gqwede, as well as the Namibia National Students Organisation (Nanso) under the leadership of Ester Simon.

# Project helps Unam students in need



Unam SRCs visited town square for one the collections.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Simon said she is in full support of the campaign and is trying to help it get traction. She also supports the Unam SRC in their quest to source money for the student aid. She described student financial battles as an issue and main concern when it comes to the academic journey, which needs to be tackled.

Simon said that financial problems are a part of many if not all students' struggles and that it is not just a Unam issue. Individuals should therefore be open to assisting the campaign by do-

nating and spreading the word, in order to attract more people to donate.

A total collection of N\$3 147 was collected on 15 March. Further collections are scheduled to take place three times a month, two of which will be done off campus.

A total of 20 collection were donated by the Financial Literacy Initiative (FLI), which has pledged to donate cans every month during the collection periods. A total of 37 people, including SRC members, faculty

representatives, as well as the Unam housing committee, part in the March collection process.

The Hage Geingob and Khomasdal campuses are also engaged in the project. Some of last year's collections took place at these campuses.

The campaign was initially aimed at covering student tuition fees. However, the focus is now on helping needy communities and aiding students who are in dire need of assistance. An example would be a student who is receiving financial aid for their tuition and accommodation, but does not have funds for food or toiletries.

Unam staff also showed their support for the initiative during the collection periods.

The campaign is a collaborative effort between the SRC and the dean of students, who has given the project the necessary support.

Wimmerth called on the general public as well as companies and organisations to give support to the project. She urged individuals and firms to call in and make donations, because the initiative is really helpful in terms of the students and any assistance at all would be highly appreciated.