

International relations expound at the University of Namibia

 forumonline.unam.edu.na/international-relations-expound-at-the-university-of-namibia

October 31, 2024

Towards the end of 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Department of Comparative Cultural Psychology at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Leipzig, Germany) and The University of Namibia (UNAM).

The MOU is focused on guest lectures and collaborative research in the field of Developmental and Cross-cultural Psychology. Other aspects of the relationship focus on skills development, student and staff exchange at the Department of Psychology and Social Work, UNAM.

For the past few years, the partners facilitated guest lectures to the UNAM community, conducted collaborative research in the field of Developmental and Cross-cultural Psychology and offered research opportunities and supervision to students.



As part of the next phase of this flourishing relationship, Dr R. Stengelin from the Department of Comparative Cultural Psychology at Max Planck has secured additional funding for the next five years.

The funding will be utilised to fund travel, accommodation, and living expenses in Germany/Namibia as well as student data collection as part of cross-cultural research projects in developmental psychology.

A rigorous selection process recently concluded in October 2024 where three Namibian students were selected for the student exchange programme next year (2025). The selection panel was impressed with the applicants and were called upon to meticulously elucidate about the selected candidates.

The selected candidates include Ms T. Nakale (3rd year student; Bachelor of Arts in Psychology); Mrs C. Beukes (Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology student) and Ms R. Mulike (UNAM graduate; Bachelor of Arts in Clinical Psychology).

These students will visit Max Planck in January 2025 for six weeks to learn more about and commence with their research projects, German culture and Developmental Psychology.



During his visit to UNAM in October 2024, Dr Stengelin attended meetings with Professor Dr. C. Stefan (Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Development) and Dr R. Shivoro (Assistant Director: International Relations).

The meetings focused on briefing UNAM management about the milestones and future plans related to this relationship.

Challenges were noted regarding promotion guidelines at UNAM (authorship restrictions), delays with ethical clearance for collaborative and funded research projects, and boundaries about funding obtained, linked to the newly introduced performance management system at UNAM. These challenges unfortunately hinder internationalisation and future collaborations.

The partners also discussed possible collaborations focusing on multidisciplinary research laboratories and opportunities where UNAM can become a centre of excellence in research on child development within Africa.

The partners remain optimistic that some of these concerns can be addressed to facilitate further internationalisation, which remains a core aim of UNAM's scientific agenda.