Young Professional Social Media Reporters support Higher Education in Africa

A FOCUS ON NAMIBIA

Erick Natangwe Uukule: Undergraduate student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The Social Media training was very useful. Through it, I became aware that there is more to Twitter than “Twaring and roasting” one another. The ability of social media to act as an important tool in information sharing and networking was one of my major gains from this training. I also got to learn the importance of visual aids (photos) in social media reporting and through this training, I must say, my skills in photography have improved. But most of all, being able to sift through information quickly and share it quickly and accurately is the most useful thing this training has taught me.

For the future, I dream of an Africa where the culture of sharing is exercised, an Africa where I do not have to apply for a visa to travel to another African state, an Africa where there is peace, an Africa where there is adequate investment in agriculture, a self-sufficient Africa. My dream is to become a consultant specialising in food processing systems and post-harvest technologies. That is where I would like to see myself in 10 years and I hope to be significantly involved in RUFORUM so that I can also be an agent of change and afford other students the chance that was given to me by the RUFORUM team this year.

Dolly Tuaandi: Undergraduate student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

As a student this was a steep learning curve. I absorbed much from the “smart brains” and thus sharpened my technical knowledge. I learnt the importance of multitasking from an innovator to a user of the available resources in taking Agriculture serious in Higher Education Institution. I also understood the importance of research to food security in Africa.

I want to become an animal nutritionist. My dream is to eradicate Hunger through working with agricultural organizations where I believe I will be an asset to promoting food security around the world. Sometimes I am afraid of my own dreams, but 10 years from now I would love to be the best mother and wife to my family and travel as far
as I can. I see myself being an asset to the world, exploring each and every area of the agricultural sector. I would love to be part of an innovation team and lead myself and others to excellence. I am also passionate about raising funds for students, like myself, that cannot afford further studies.

**Lavinia Haikukutu:** Masters student at the University of Namibia, Department of Animal Science.

I was not a social media fan before the Social Media Training, but thought I would give it a try anyway. It turned out that social media is not as bad as I thought. I had heard of twitter before this training but had not bothered to find out what it is all about. If it wasn’t for this training, I still would not know. I created my first twitter account a few days before the training, as was requested, but I still did not understand how one could find it interesting because I did not know how to tweet. Thanks to Joan Apio of RUFORUM, today I can tweet and stay connected to friends as well as access opportunities from RUFORUM. Now I can also help others that are having difficulties using twitter.

I have many dreams. I aspire to be a researcher in virology; oncology and gene therapy; and animal genetics. In 10 years’ time I see myself as a part-time lecturer and full time researcher at the University of Namibia.

**David Gregorius:** Masters student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The training was indeed useful as I learnt how report on events that are agriculture related. I had never had a twitter account in my life, but I gained knowledge and expertise on how to tweet and share or retweet other people’s tweets, cite photos attached to tweets and use hashtags. I really enjoyed the training and would want to remain connected to RUFORUM as a Social Media Reporter whenever it is hosting Annual General Meetings.

I am currently pursuing a Master’s degree in Food Microbiology. I would describe myself as a vibrant creative mind, able to use my special innate knowledge and talent that has helped me realize my expertise in the area of Food Science Education and Technology. I initiate standards that are collectively agreed upon and align with organizational goals, values and
core objectives. In addition, I enjoy applying energy through multiple monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to create support systems in meeting quality standards.

After 10 years, I would want to find myself in an industry where I can demonstrate my skills and expertise in analyzing food content and develop ways to process, preserve and package or store food according to industry and government regulations. Alternatively, I would want to work with research based groups in the public sector as well as in local universities in order to improve research and human resource capacity building through training.

Selma N. Nghituwamhata: Undergraduate student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Bachelor of Science in Crop Science)

The Social Media Training was a great success for me. I was exposed to the importance of agriculture, wide opportunities available and the major roles that RUFORUM is playing in capacity building for agriculture in Africa. Through this training I have learnt how to report events especially on twitter that I had no idea how to use before, look for ideas and information that are relevant to the audience, as well as market myself by interacting with the right people and organisations with which I have common interests. Most importantly, this training connected me to people in RUFORUM such as Prof. Adipala Ekwamu and Sylvia Mkandawire from the Secretariat, whom I believe can mentor me.

In the next 10 years, I see myself as plant breeder with a Doctorate degree in millet improvement and able to help my country and the entire continent at large. I have realized a need for qualified plant breeders in Namibia. More than 60% of Namibians and a large African population depend on millet for food, however, the yield is very low. As a result, Namibia still imports pearl millet from India to meet market demand. In addition, there is no Seed Company in the country due to lack of professional plant breeders. A lot remains to be done to reach the African vision for food sustainability and I see myself as one of the people who will bring our continent to that level.
**Panduleni Haindongo:** Undergraduate student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the Integrated Environmental Science (BSc Integrated Environmental Sciences).

The training on Social Media reporting was an eye-opener that gave me more insight on how to provide relevant information to the general public. It also built my confidence to actively participate in public events. The forum was an opportunity for me to learn about challenges of agriculture in Africa and how the sector can be enhanced.

My academic interests are in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Environmental Law. I would like to pursue my masters in either of the aforementioned fields. This will help me become a source of guidance in environmental projects to ensure that sustainable development is achieved in Namibia and Africa as a whole. My dream is to see a self-sustained environment with minimal damage and disturbances.

**Etuna N. Shaningua:** Masters student at the University of Namibia, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Department of Food Science and Technology.

The training was a success and indeed helpful to students like myself. Social media allows me to create meaningful and personal relationships with people around the world in ways that other channels don’t. By remaining active on social media, I can make myself visible as part of a community, which encourages people to take interest in my business, and hopefully convert the interest into sales because the more people retweet what I share on a social media network, the broader and further the tweet travels.

I would like to become a nutritionist and microbiologist as I am concerned about the beneficial components of food. As a food scientist, I will need to ensure that food bought from a supermarket contains the optimum amount of these components. In 10 years, I would also want to see myself involved in food development so that we add value to traditional food including pearl millet.