

Namibia Agricultural Education: Increasing Small Businesses and Rural Community Incomes through New Approaches to Agricultural Value Chain Education

What we propose:

The more processed the product, the higher the price it demands in the market place. This simple economic principle is the basis of Value Chain Economic Development, and it is at the heart of our multi-university proposal.

Subsistence agricultural producers are paid relatively little for their grain, cotton, rice, vegetables, fruits and nuts. Those same raw materials once processed into flour, non-perishable goods, or other consumer-ready goods bring a substantially higher price. Our goal is to help the subsistence farmers in Namibia transition from producing the raw materials to owning the product until it is ready for sale to the final consumer, and in the process receive a greater percentage of the final price for their goods.

Value Chain Education is the key to helping agricultural producers in Namibia's communal agriculture production system. The organization of community facilities including rice processing plants, canning facilities for vegetables and other value-adding options will help small producers compete with their larger counterparts by offering larger quantities of high-quality, refined products that can be sold for a higher price. It can also improve the producers' ability to purchase seed and supplies at lower volume rates. Communities in the communal agriculture region will also benefit from the community-based processing facilities through added jobs that will help reduce poverty.

The creation of a Namibian International Centre of Excellence (NICE) for Value Chain Economic Development will generate an integral system to reduce poverty by increasing value within all stages of the production to market. A NICE Board of Directors will provide advice and guidance for this 10-year project.

Our approach:

Education in the Value Chain approach will provide a strong, long-term benefit for Namibia. This 10-year program, working from both ends of the educational spectrum, has a high probability of success.

One goal is to strengthen the human capacity, curriculum, and outreach programs in higher education addressing economic growth and poverty reduction in local communities through a value chain approach. Indicators for this goal impact all areas of higher education:

- Creation of a Centre of Excellence for Value Chain Economic Development;
- Enhanced University of Namibia Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources outreach activities;
- Improved effectiveness of the Teaching Learning Improvement Unit;
- Improved University of Namibia Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources research capacity; and
- Improved University of Namibia Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources university ranking.

An additional goal is to improve the capacity of primary and secondary teachers to provide relevant agricultural skills to their students. Indicators for this goal focus on individual communities:

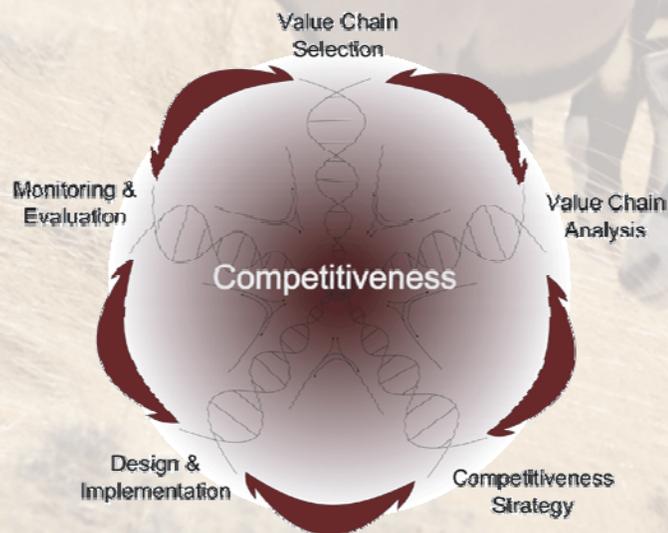
- Primary and secondary school teachers trained to incorporate agriculture in their curricular;
- Establish School or Community Agricultural Processing and Training Programs at UNAM Regional Centres.

The 10-year project complements the Namibian government's efforts in addressing development challenges in Namibia.

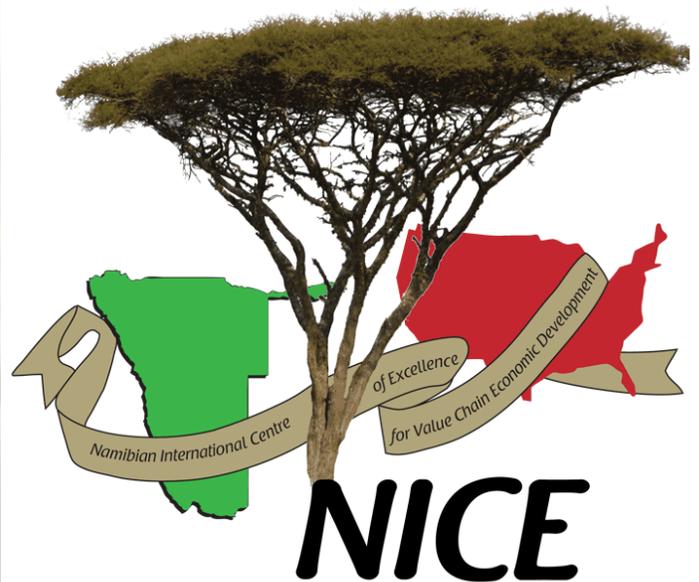
Vision: The University of Namibia, through its Centre of Excellence for Value Chain Economic Development, will advance economic growth, poverty reduction, and quality of life in rural communities throughout Namibia as well as provide a positive model for the entire Southern African region.

Why Namibia?

Namibia has a long history of embracing sustainability and environmental consciousness. Interest in climate change and the potential influence on the nation's future are a high priority for the government as evidenced in its national research and developmental priorities. Since gaining independence in 1990, Namibia continues to set an example in West Africa. Namibia has a stable democracy, relatively high adult literacy rate (85 percent in 2005 according to the U.S. State Department), and a well-established education system. The nation and its people are well positioned to benefit from Value Chain Economics. The 10-year program will also provide an excellent, time-tested template to eventually transfer the program to other nations across Africa and around the globe.



Antoinette de Chavonnes Vrugt in her book, *My Hungry Heart* said, "Namibians . . . are products of the extreme elements that rule the skies, seas, deserts and plains of this country. . . forever scanning the skies for signs of rain." It is this cultural understanding that helps position Namibia to be a regional leader in coping with global climatic changes through NICE and its proposed educational plans.



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