Background

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by the power of asserting ideas into reality. Two years of living in Changshu China at a United World College was a transformative experience that solidified my passion for innovation. In Changshu I witnessed, in real time, the remarkable results of what happens when we invest in the brilliance of young people. My peers were constantly engaged in innovation, ideation and most importantly, execution—slowly making the world better, one well-executed idea at a time. Naturally, I have always contrasted my observations at UWC with the dire lack of substantial innovation by young people in my home country of Namibia. According to the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report, Namibia is the third-worst country in Southern Africa in youth innovation and entrepreneurship, with only 33% of young people in the country starting and/or running their own businesses. More importantly, Namibia’s youth unemployment rate currently stands at 46.1%. Upon scrutiny of the set of conditions surrounding youth entrepreneurship in Namibia, it is evident that one of the inhibiting factors to innovation is simply the lack of compelling conversation. Even when we do talk about innovation, it is not in a dialogical fashion that resonates with young Namibians. The Namibian Youth Investment Conference Biz is one of few (albeit unpopular) platforms that encourages conversation about youth innovation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, in December of 2021, the president of the Republic of Namibia, Hage Geingob, encouraged young Namibians to create their own jobs and faced significant pushback from young Namibians themselves. The aversion towards these kinds of platforms is not because young Namibians do not have the capacity or the desire to innovate, it is simply because the platforms and/or messaging used to encourage innovation are not contemporary or contextually appealing to young people! Beyond conferences and encouragement from public leaders, young Namibians must see other relatable young people just like them, innovating! That means amplifying the platforms of the few young people who are involved in the important work of innovation and entrepreneurship. Hereby, my aim is to make the discourse around youth innovation and entrepreneurship relevant and accessible to young people.

What?

In 2022, I received a grant from Claremont McKenna College’s Sponsored Internships and Experiences program to fund a pilot season of Spotlight: a limited television and web series focusing on youth innovation and entrepreneurship in Namibia. After the successful production of a first season, I signed an agreement with Namibia’s biggest television network, the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. Season 1 is set to air on NBC, which boasts up to 33, 109, 469 video views across all their platforms per month. The NBC agreed to broadcast Spotlight on condition that I produce subsequent seasons. Having the certainty of a major, credible platform for Spotlight, this proposal specifically seeks funding support for a second season, which would be my Project for Peace. Like the pilot season, season 2 would consist of a total of 10 talk show style episodes, highlighting 10 young Namibian entrepreneurs in the fields of retail, social enterprise, food, fashion, science, environment, financial services, performing arts, creative arts and entertainment, government, law, public policy, beauty and lifestyle. These entrepreneurs range from internationally acclaimed media personality, Mavis Braga Elias, to the creator of South Africa’s most beloved home-grown sneakers, Theo Baloyi, and many more. The episodes would be 30 minutes each, to be aired on the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, with production commencing in May 2023. The production would intentionally outsource all service provision to young Namibian media professionals.
Spotlight: Amplifying Youth Innovation & Entrepreneurship in Namibia

Namibia
Claremont McKenna College
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Future Impact & Sustainability

Even though I managed to produce a high-quality production with the initial funding received over the summer of 2022, I fell short of my intended impact as a result of financial constraints. With Projects for Peace funding, I aim to enhance the production’s impact by purchasing N$1000 ($65) business vouchers from each entrepreneur, to be gifted to a lucky viewer every episode. This is to ensure that the production is more generative than extractive for show subjects. Specifically, the two key areas of intended impact include:

- Voucher investments in interviewees’ respective businesses
- NBC’s national reach with an average daily viewership of 1.6 million people daily

Producing a second season necessarily ensures that Spotlight can eventually air. In addition to the young Namibian viewers at large, the technical production process of Spotlight would empower a total of young Namibians filling the following roles: 5 members of a local video production start-up (Spectrum Media), 2 set designers, 2 production apprentices, 1 show host, 1 graphic designer, 1 behind the scenes photographer and 1 set manager. I insist on outsourcing work explicitly to the locals of the respective country—in this case, those local service providers are young Namibians. In the future, they will hopefully be locals of other African countries. This work, the productions over the summers of 2022 and 2023 respectively, are the beginning of a constant, Shark-Tank style series on youth innovation and entrepreneurship in different African countries. With the anticipated viewing success of the series, I expect to be able to secure more funding to document innovation and spark subsequent conversation in other parts of Africa that have low levels of discourse on innovation and entrepreneurship. Equally important, I anticipate impact on the young entrepreneurs to be interviewed who are expected to benefit from the publicity and expected new clientele. Most importantly, the show would make investments to the value of 1000 NAD into all the entrepreneur’s businesses. The overarching goal is to create a distinctly engaging way of sparking interest in innovation and youth entrepreneurship in Namibia.

I would measure viewership impact through engagement analytics to be provided by NBC in their capacity as the content distributor. Data about how many people tune in to the production will be available from the television station (NBC), and online viewer statistics. Additionally, the production team members, young Namibians, will grow in the practice of a creative and media production craft that is heavily underfunded and undervalued in the country.

To ensure the sustainability of the learnings of the production team, I plan on collaborating with the College of the Arts in Namibia to provide training to the team to develop skills in technological expertise, written and visual storytelling, and video production and graphic design. The Spotlight social media pages, website and general online presence will serve as a reservoir for wisdom and fun-spirited but crucial conversation on youth innovation and entrepreneurship in Namibia. Importantly, the digital body of work will serve as the basis for securing more funding and support to carry out the same work on a larger scale in other parts of Africa. By the end of the production of the limited series, the youth entrepreneurs would have had the opportunity to highlight their important work, the production team would have refined their skills in media and production and most importantly, young Namibians would perceive entrepreneurship as a relatable, immersive, accessible and worthwhile undertaking.