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U.S. Ambassador Visits Eenhana Grassroots Youth Projects

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Daughton extended an invitation to Eenhana area youth to join the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Network begun by U.S. President Barack Obama to help connect young African leaders and ultimately, to empower them to increase economic opportunity, accountability, and equality across the African continent. Ambassador Daughton discussed the benefits of YALI, exchange programs and small grants funding opportunities during a dialogue hosted by the TATE Institute of Technology in Eenhana on Tuesday, August 11.



“I am here to encourage you today to apply for the YALI Fellowship program, which is open to everyone, irrespective of whether you live in an urban or in a rural area,” explained Daughton to 30 young participants at the event. According to the U.S. Ambassador, the number of open fellowships for Namibians will double from nine (9) to eighteen (18) in 2016.



During the town hall meeting, TATE Institute Executive Director Sebulon David (David) shared his experience being a 2015 YALI Mandela Washington Fellow who recently returned from a seven-week training program in the United States. The fellowship for 500 Fellows from across Africa culminated in a Presidential Summit in Washington, D.C. during which President Obama advised youth to be the leaders they seek.

“Even after my return, I remain in touch with my professors in the U.S. The beauty of the YALI Network is that they are so encouraging despite all the challenges one may face in Namibia, and eventually you will succeed in your endeavors. YALI is a lifetime opportunity,” said David.

David also described his experience as a grant recipient of the U.S. Ambassador’s Self-Help Program. The small grant amounted to approximately N\$170,000 and served to expand access to information and technology for TATE Institute patrons.

Ambassador Daughton praised the initiative of American Peace Corps Volunteers Erick Seo and Matthews Robles who have assisted the TATE Institute to draft a grant proposal and secure funding of



approximately N\$140,000 from the University of Namibia (UNAM) for a special project designed to facilitate wireless internet connectivity (WiFi) for Eenhana residents at the facility.

Erick Seo narrated the story of a boy who succeeded with his dreams although he did not pass Grade 12, and Matthew Robles added, “You, the youth, are the present and the future of Namibia – and you can make anything possible if you want to. Identify a problem and find a solution. It’s all about motivation. Never give up!”

Earlier in the day, Ambassador Daughton had visited a U.S. government-funded civic education workshop hosted by the Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID) under a tree on the outskirts of



Eenhana. This was one of close to 600 workshops currently provided countrywide under the project known as the “Youth Leadership for Democracy Participation in Namibia.” Amongst others, youth learn about Namibia’s political structures and how to participate in civic processes, including by using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Ambassador Daughton praised Namibia’s democracy as a model for other African countries because “peace and political stability are preconditions for economic success. However, democracy is not easy and takes work,” he said. “That’s why we believe it is important to get the youth involved because you need to be engaged. Who sits in Parliament and what government decides – it is in your hands,” said Ambassador Daughton.

The workshop series aims to strengthen self-confidence and political involvement of youth and community members, key building blocks of Namibian civil society and democracy. The project, which also includes training for 300 young election observers, is funded with approximately N\$5million, and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Ambassador Daughton will round off his tour today, Tuesday, August 11, with a visit to the Oshaango Clinic, which is supported by the U.S government through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

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Background:

USAID:

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is leading the U.S. government's efforts to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies around the world. The American people, through USAID, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for over 50 years and for over 25 years in Namibia. As a primary implementing agency of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) in Namibia, USAID provides technical assistance to local programs to ensure sustainability and strengthen country ownership. For more information visit www.usaid.gov and www.pepfar.gov.

Ambassador's Self Help Fund:

The U.S. Ambassador's Self-Help Program is a grassroots assistance program that supports small-scale activities to promote self-reliance and to foster development through innovative, community-led projects. Introduced in 1990, the U.S. Embassy in Windhoek has provided more than N\$23 million in funding to community-based development projects in Namibia. The TATE Institute received a USD13,500 Self-Help grant.

Young African Leaders Initiative:

For more information on YALI and the Mandela Washington Fellowship visit <https://youngafricanleaders.state.gov/washington-fellowship>.

Peace Corps:

For more information on Peace Corps Volunteers visit www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer.