

Dreams *do come true*

By: Staff Reporter | September 2022

Youth development is a priority for the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). The future of agriculture rests with the youth. It is for this purpose, the Youth in Agriculture (Y-Agriculture) programme was developed, to promote professional careers in agriculture.



Since 2014, the NAMC through the Y Agriculture collaborated with the various agricultural industries, conducting career awareness, providing bursary funding, and work experience placement.

Dimani Agricultural College, was one the beneficiaries of the Y Agriculture. Various students from the aforementioned high school benefitted greatly from this programme.

Meet twenty-five (25) year old Khodani Madula, one of the students who went through the Y Agriculture Programme. She hails from Rathidili Village, Thohoyandou in Limpopo. She first got wind of the agricultural economist profession while on a school visit to the NAMC in 2015, as part of the Y-Agriculture career guidance awareness.

“Every year, the NAMC with their partners, would visit our school Dimani Agricultural College to demonstrate planting especially potatoes. In return, they will pay for our school visit trip to the NAMC. It is here we also got to be introduced about agricultural economics in detail” says Khodani.

Following the career awareness, upon matriculation, Khodani enrolled at the University of Venda for BSc Agricultural Economics.



^ Khodani Madula visited the NAMC while on a school visit in 2015

▼ Khodani Madula now works for the NAMC



^ Dimani Agricultural School learners first group interacting with NAMC Staff in 2015

> Khodani on her first year at University of Venda

NAMC is committed to championing and supporting agricultural creativity in order to enhance the viability of the agricultural sector.

In the course of her studies, the NAMC has been responsible for her tuition fees and study materials. In 2016, the NAMC invited her to the Youth in Agriculture programme launch in Pretoria, where she became more inspired. The event motivated her to work harder and ignited a greater passion for her to start a side business in agriculture.

In 2018, she participated in DHET's student competition for students in entrepreneurship, where she received a cash prize as second-place winner. She then registered her MUCO Farming Enterprise and built some infrastructure, proceeds from her own pockets.

Khodani graduated with BSc in Agricultural Economics in 2021 and is presently enrolled at the University of Venda, pursuing a Master's degree in the same field.



"In pursuit of an understanding of the connection between the economy and the agricultural sector, my interest in agricultural economics grew" she said.

She recently bagged an opportunity to study for a master's degree in Applied Economics at the University of Bath in England, United Kingdom.

"I believe that combining the two master's degrees will enable me to forecast and make predictions about future opportunities regarding efficient production within the agricultural sector at any level, based on theoretical and econometric models." she added.



^ Dimani Agricultural School learners group photo in 2015

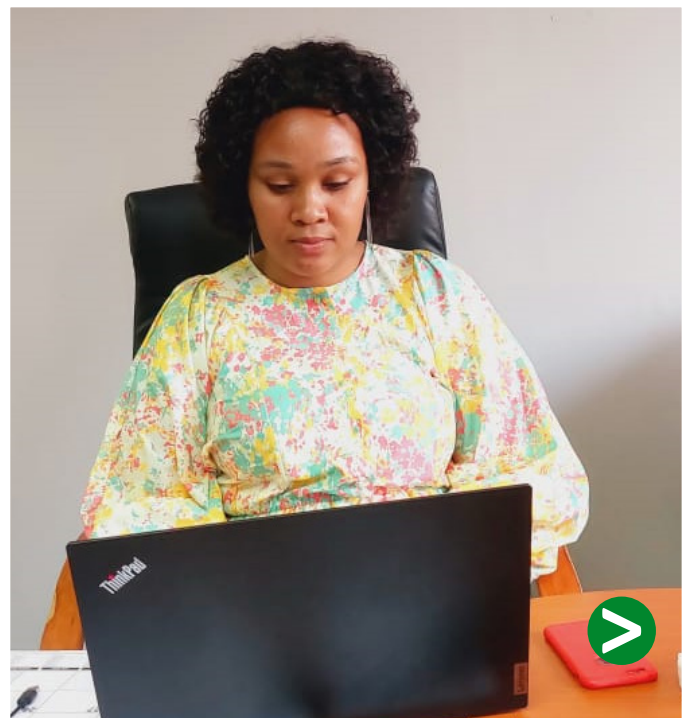


< Khodani (in Pink top) registering to attend the Youth in Agriculture Launch in 2016

In light of the above, Khodani was fortunate to be selected as an intern. Khodani now works for the Smallholder Market Access unit of the Markets and Economic Research Centre (MERC) Division.

Joining the NAMC has always been one of Khodani's cherished goals. "I know the NAMC as an organization that grooms youth into their best of abilities. I drew motivation from my mentor Dr Ndumiso Mazibuko, who has been my mentor since 2016 till present" she said.

The knowledge and skills she acquired, amongst others, since joining, include conducting economic research for the development of smallholder farmers in the agricultural sector, writing publication articles and staying on top of recent economic issues in our country and globally.



> Khodani working at the NAMC offices

"Working at this organization of which I have always dreamt of joining, is to me an incredible experience. For me, this is an answered prayer, a dream that come true. NAMC contributed greatly to the person I am today, and my first working experience here fulfils my heart in an unimaginable way. The expectations I had were exceeded. The team I work with empowers me to be the best I can be, they give me the chance to contribute my knowledge and try to expose me to a lot of opportunities to expand my capabilities." Khodani said.