



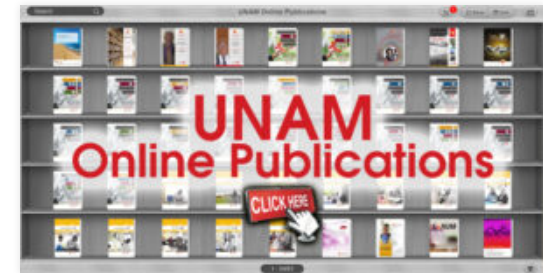
# From Keetmanshoop to Koper as two Namibian students soar in Slovenia

Simon Namesho — July 8, 2025



When Gaudentia Hansen and Schmeline Kooper boarded a plane for the first time out of Namibia, they knew their lives were never gonna be the same again.

Both final-year Bachelor of Education in Childhood & Pre-Primary Education students at UNAM's Southern Campus, Gaudentia and Schmeline had been selected for a 'once-in-a-lifetime' student exchange to the University of Primorska, Slovenia, as part of an international programme that took them thousands of kilometres from home.





For three months, March to May 2025, the duo traded the familiar arid landscape of Keetmanshoop for the cobbled streets and sparkling coastlines of Koper, a vibrant city nestled between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea.

“We had the incredible opportunity to learn, live, and laugh alongside students from across the globe,” says Schmeline. “It wasn’t always easy, but every day was an adventure.”



Their academic journey at the University of Primorska was eye-opening. “The teaching style was so different – more discussion, more listening to each other’s ideas, and so much focus on real classroom experiences,” Gaudentia explained.



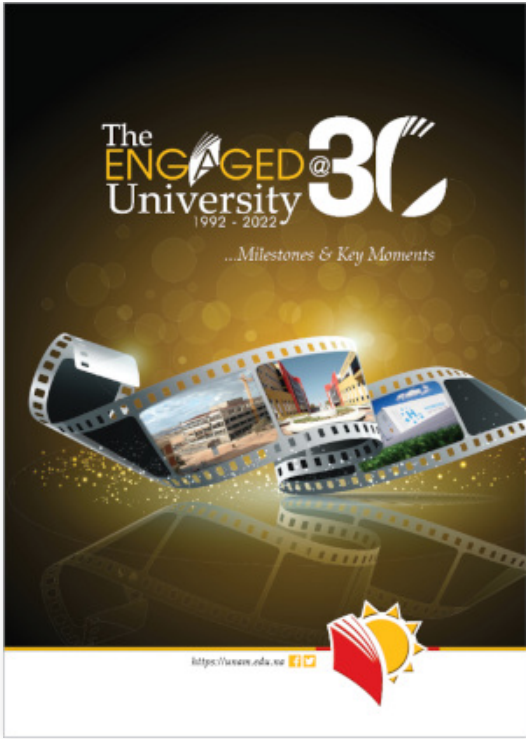
Courses ranged from playful preschool pedagogy to modern language teaching techniques. “In one class, our grade depended on how much we participated. At first, it was nerve-wracking, but it pushed us out of our comfort zones and turned us into confident speakers.”

## Say yes to every opportunity

Life outside the classroom brought its own challenges. Slovene, the local language, was a daily puzzle. “Ordering food, taking buses, even asking for directions, all of it tested our patience and sense of humour,”



recalls Schmeline, laughing. “We learned to appreciate the power of Google Translate, but also picked up phrases to connect with the locals.”



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Their weekends were spent wandering through the medieval lanes of Piran, sampling pastries in seaside cafés, and even venturing to nearby Italy. "Slovenia is beautiful, with mountains, sea, and so much history," said Gaudentia. "It made us fall in love with traveling and with learning from other cultures."

Both students say the exchange made them stronger, more independent, and more open-minded. "We returned home more confident, ready to try new teaching ideas, and eager to share what we learned," says Schmeline.



For future students, Gaudentia offers simple advice: "Say yes to every opportunity. You will grow in ways you never imagined."

Their story is proof that, sometimes, the best way to learn is to step into the unknown, and soar.





The two students' exchange followed the educational visit of Dr. Annaly Strauss and Ms. Tertisia Nghipondoka from the School of Education to the same University in Slovenia, in April 2024. Their trip was part of the Erasmus Plus Programme.

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