



Geoscience communication in Namibia: YES Network Namibia spreading the message to young scientists

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The Young Earth Scientists (YES) Network is an international association for early-career geoscientists under the age of 35 years that was formed as a result of the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) in 2007. YES Network aims to establish an interdisciplinary global network of early-career geoscientists to solve societal issues/challenges using geosciences, promote scientific research and interdisciplinary networking, and support professional development of early-career geoscientists. The Network has several National Chapters including one in Namibia. YES Network Namibia (YNN) was formed in 2009, at the closing ceremony of IYPE in Portugal and YNN was consolidated in 2013 with the current set-up.

YNN supports the activities and goals of the main YES Network at national level providing a platform for young Namibian scientists with a passion to network, information on geoscience opportunities and promoting earth sciences. Currently most of the members are geoscientists from the Geological Survey of Namibia (GSN) and University of Namibia. In 2015, YNN plans to carry out two workshops on career guidance, establish a mentorship program involving alumni and experienced industry experts, and increase involvement in outreach activities, mainly targeting high school pupils. Network members will participate in a range of educational activities such as school career and science fairs communicating geoscience to the general public, learners and students. The community outreach programmes are carried out to increase awareness of the role geosciences play in society. In addition, YNN will continue to promote interactive collaboration between the University of Namibia, Geological Survey of Namibia (GSN) and Geological Society of Namibia.

Despite the numerous potential opportunities YNN offers young scientists in Namibia and its presence on all major social media platforms, the Network faces several challenges. One notable challenge the Network faces is indifference among early-career geoscientists in the industry and university students to geoscience activities outside the confines of academia and the industry such as networking and outreach activities. This is compounded by the Network's perceived lack of relevance and appeal among young Namibian scientists. To become more 'popular' YNN needs to solve the issue of indifference among early-career geoscientists in the industry and University students by listening to their needs and actively engaging them in the process. Good communication skills are essential and YNN has to reformulate the way it reaches out to its audiences by developing more active ways to communicate geosciences. With this in mind, YNN plans to implement best practice methods to engage more young scientists in YNN and provide support and guidance on geoscience opportunities.