

BI-ANNUAL

VOL 2

# NEWSLETTER

THE STRENGTH OF A COMMUNITY LIES IN ITS PEOPLE



Written By : Emma Israel

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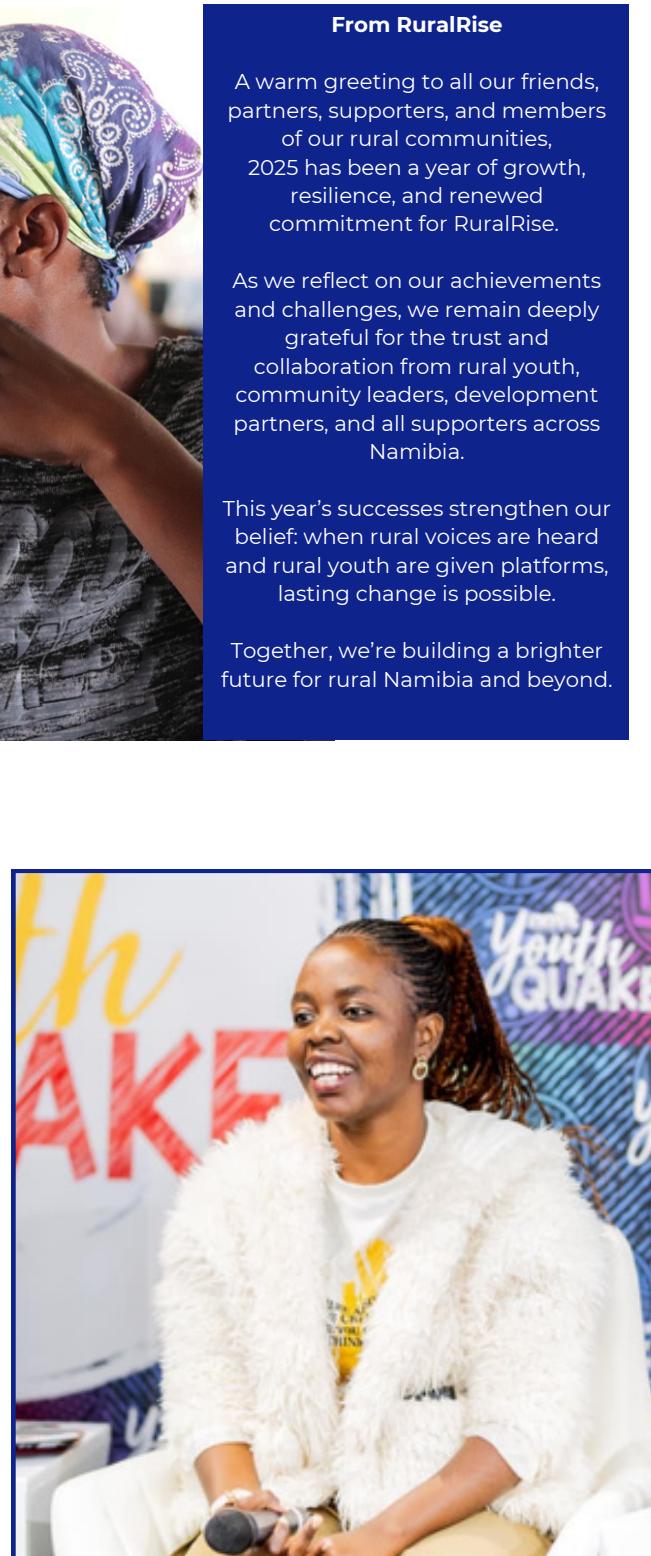


## HIGHLIGHT

### **Nicolene Goses, Okombahé RYN, Civic Engagement Officer**

Nicolene Goses, the Civic Engagement officer from the Okombahé Rural Youth Network participated in a panel discussion titled "Celebrating Youth-Led Innovations and Advocacy" in Windhoek on 15 August 2025, where she shared her experience running a small business from home. She identified challenges and opportunities in rural SME development.

We are excited about the recognition the Rural Youth Network is gaining as well as the opportunity for rural youth to engage with decision makers.



[Read More on our website](#)

## Our Vision & Strategy

Written By: Eslien Tsuses, Founder and CEO

### Laying the Foundation: Our Vision for Sustainable Rural Communities

Rural-urban migration remains a pressing challenge. Despite progress, many rural youth still view cities as the primary source of opportunity. This underscores the urgency of creating viable rural livelihoods. Sustaining community-led projects beyond their initial phases continues to be difficult many small businesses and rural initiatives struggle without ongoing support. This confirms the importance of RuralRise's role in monitoring, evaluation, incubation and long-term support. Ensuring meaningful inclusion of youth not just as beneficiaries but as decision-makers requires constant effort, mentorship, and structural support. The documentary and civic workshops helped but more remains to be done.

RuralRise remains dedicated to empowering rural communities in Namibia ensuring that development is community-driven, sustainable, and aligned with national priorities. We work to reverse rural-urban migration by generating opportunities, building capacity, and fostering community-owned growth.

Through a combination of leadership and skills development, project incubation and support, policy advocacy, and community-owned initiatives, we aim to build self-reliant rural hubs that thrive on local innovation and resilience.



#### Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, Planning and Review Workshop.

*RuralRise was invited to participate in the planning and review workshop from 22-26 Sep 2025. More on page 6.*

## Core Programs

### From the Ground Up (FTGU):

Hosts workshops, community dialogues, and the Rural Youth Network (RYN) with a focus on youth empowerment, leadership training, and incubation of youth-led community projects.

### Ignite Rural Vodcast:

A multimedia platform that elevates rural voices, fosters dialogue among youth, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and advocates, and raises awareness of rural issues such as governance, climate change, food security, entrepreneurship, and inclusion.

[Read More on our website](#)

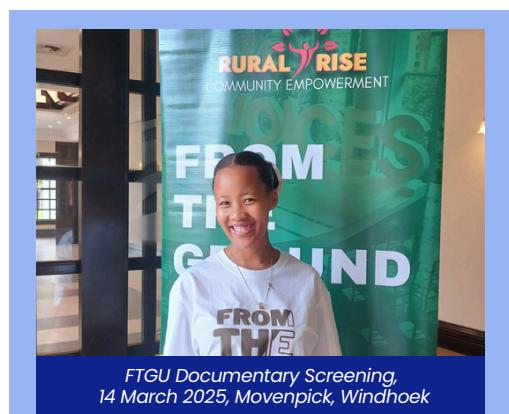
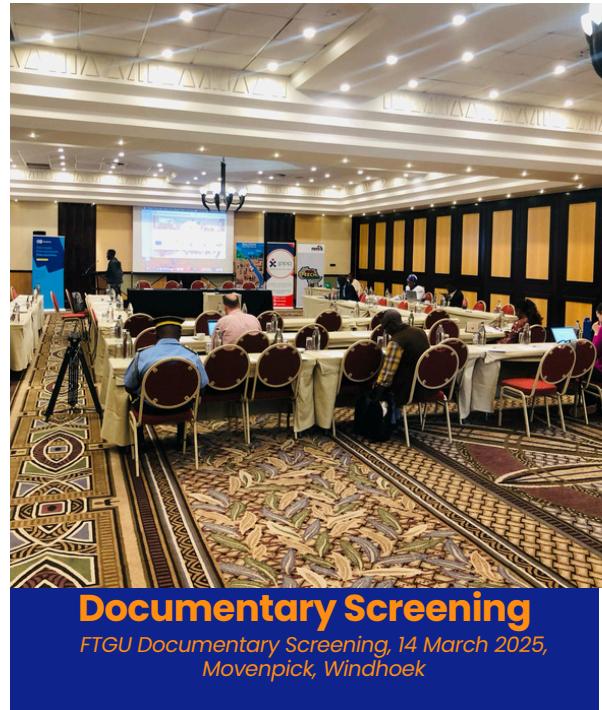
## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### **“From the Ground Up” documentary screening with stakeholders, Windhoek, Namibia**

On 14 March 2025, RuralRise hosted a pivotal dialogue and screening of its documentary From the Ground Up (FTGU) in Windhoek, bringing together approximately 50 key stakeholders, including policymakers, community leaders, and rural youth.

This event concluded the first phase of the FTGU policy sprint, funded by the European Union under the “New Voices, New Narratives” program.

The screening showcased stories from young people in Utuseb, Uis, and Okombahe (Erongo Region), highlighting their challenges, aspirations, and community contributions.



Rosy Khaxas, Utuseb RYN, Erongo Region

#### **Rural Youth Network(RYN) Ambassadors featured bring Rural Voices to policy makers**

We're proud to feature Rosy Khaxas from Utuseb (Erongo Region), one of the inspiring young voices spotlighted by RuralRise through the From the Ground Up (FTGU) project.

As a panelist during the documentary screening and dialogue and as a youth protagonist in the FTGU documentary. Rosy shared her hopes and vision for her community, including a heartfelt call for the establishment of a school in Utuseb so that young people there can complete full secondary education without having to relocate to urban areas.



During the dialogue, RuralRise facilitated discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Urban & Rural Development, the Ministry of Youth, Sport & National Service, the Namibian Police, and traditional leaders, centering rural youth concerns in policy conversations.

According to the project coordinator, **Victory April**, the goal was not only to amplify youth voices but also to connect them with opportunities to improve their livelihoods and influence policy.



## POLICY BRIEFING MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

19 March 2025, Hilton, Windhoek

As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthen rural-youth inclusion in national development, RuralRise convened a **Policy Briefing Meeting with key stakeholders** in Windhoek, on 19 March 2025. The gathering brought together representatives from government ministries, civil-society organizations, development partners, and youth leaders from various regions.

The purpose of the meeting was to formally present the findings, insights, and recommendations of the **From the Ground Up (FTGU) Policy Brief** and to create a platform for direct dialogue between rural youth and institutions responsible for shaping national policy.

During the session, RuralRise walked stakeholders through the realities young people face in rural Namibia: limited access to secondary education, gaps in service delivery, unemployment, lack of digital infrastructure, and insufficient channels for civic participation. Youth representatives shared firsthand experiences from communities such as Utuseb, Uis, Okombahe, and surrounding rural areas, giving the data in the Policy Brief a human voice.

The meeting marked a powerful moment of exchange one where communities and institutions met on equal ground to drive meaningful, inclusive discourse.

[Download the FTGU Policy Brief here.](#)

The Policy Brief is **also available online**, ensuring that stakeholders, partners, and community members can access it anytime, anywhere. RuralRise encourages readers to download and share it to support broader advocacy.



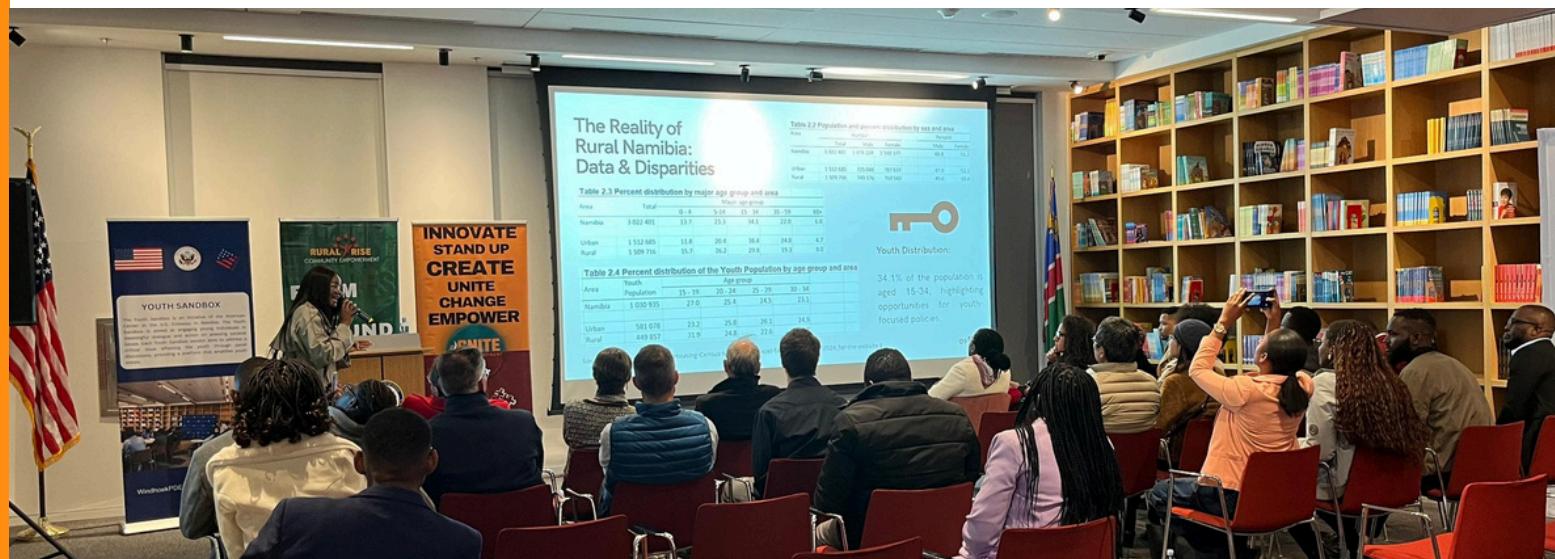
## ““FROM THE GROUND UP” documentary Screening and presentation

26 June 2025, U.S Embassy, Windhoek

In a landmark moment for RuralRise and the young people we serve, the **“From the Ground Up (FTGU)” documentary** was officially screened at the **U.S. Embassy in Windhoek**, a powerful recognition of the importance of amplifying rural voices in national and international spaces. The event brought together diplomats, development partners, civil-society organizations, and youth advocates to engage with the lived experiences, challenges, and hopes of Namibia’s rural young people.

The screening formed part of the Embassy’s commitment to supporting youth empowerment, inclusive development, and community-driven storytelling.

For many stakeholders, the documentary offered a rare, unfiltered look at the realities rural youth face daily, from limited educational access and unemployment to cultural resilience, innovation, and the desire for meaningful participation in national development.



**Cont..**

## Annual Rural Development Progress Review & Planning Workshop

At this year's Annual Rural Development Progress Review & Planning Workshop, participants were inspired by a powerful presentation from Ms. Eslien Tsuses, Founder & CEO of RuralRise. Her message was clear: Namibia's path to inclusive and sustainable development begins in its rural communities driven by its youth.

Ms. Tsuses highlighted the pressing challenges and untapped opportunities that define rural Namibia, from limited access to resources and skills development to the growing need for localized innovation. She emphasized that young people in rural areas are not merely beneficiaries of development; they are key actors who can drive economic growth, curb rural-urban migration, and build resilient local economies when given the right support.

A central focus of the presentation was RuralRise's flagship initiative, From the Ground Up (FTGU), an empowerment model designed to unlock grassroots potential. **FTGU equips rural youth with practical skills, entrepreneurial training, and community-driven problemsolving approaches that transform local livelihoods from within.**

Ms. Tsuses also showcased how strategic partnerships, mentorship opportunities, and incubation platforms are creating real impact helping young innovators move ideas into action, strengthening rural enterprises, and fostering long-term sustainability.

Importantly, the themes of the presentation align strongly with Namibia's Vision 2030, Harambee Prosperity Plan II, and the National Youth Policy II. Together, these frameworks offer a national roadmap toward equitable growth, and RuralRise's work exemplifies how grassroots initiatives can translate policy into meaningful progress on the ground. As Namibia works toward a more prosperous and inclusive future, this discussion underscored a vital truth: empowering rural youth is not only smart development it is nation-building.



[More on our YouTube Channel](#)



## YOUTH AND COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

### WHAT DOES RURAL EMPOWERMENT DO FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

**Nicolene Goses** has been a powerful voice and mobiliser for rural youth in 2025 in her role as Civic Engagement Officer for the Okombahe Rural Youth Network. From early 2025, she focused on strengthening youth participation in civic life and raising critical issues that affect her community.

She played a central role in the From the Ground Up initiative, helping to organise and facilitate community dialogues that brought young people, traditional leaders, and policymakers together. **During a dialogue in Okombahe, Nicolene spotlighted one of the most urgent challenges in her community, teenage pregnancy urging for open conversation, comprehensive sexual education, and structural support for young girls to stay in school.**

Her engagement has not gone unnoticed beyond Okombahe. In April 2025, she participated in a **3-day civic capacity building workshop**, alongside our community liaison, **Issaskar Tjandero**, showing her commitment to continuously sharpen her advocacy skills.

Nicolene also took her rural youth leadership to a national platform: she featured on a panel at **YouthQuake 2025**, under the umbrella of the Namibia Media Trust, where she shared insights on the opportunities and systemic barriers facing rural youth entrepreneurs.

Her journey is a strong example of what happens when rural youth are given platforms: she didn't just participate she helped shape conversations, challenge norms, and demand inclusion. Through her work, she's building not only her own leadership capacity but also the collective power of Okombahe's youth network.



Instagram Highlight...





The Uis Rural Youth Network hosted a membership mobilisation session in Uis, Erongo Region, bringing together young people committed to shaping the future of their community. Strong leadership remains integral to the sustainable operation of the Rural Youth Network, and we are grateful to the many young people who continue to step forward, volunteer their time, and choose to actively participate in building a united, resilient, and empowered rural youth movement.



The Utuseb Rural Youth Network organised a soccer tournament aimed at promoting unity, youth and community engagement on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2025.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Topnaar Traditional Authority for their generous support through medal and trophy sponsorship.

The Network also demonstrated initiative by raising funds through the sale of meat and rooster brotjies.

We look forward to more community-driven events convened by our Rural Youth Networks across various rural communities.



We are proud to share that our Founder and CEO, **Eslien Tsuses**, participated as a panelist at the NXT Journalism Hub's **Ignite Talk Podcast Bootcamp**. Her contribution highlighted the importance of amplifying rural voices and using storytelling to bridge the gap between policy and lived experience.

Through this platform, she championed the perspectives of Namibia's rural youth reinforcing our ongoing commitment to equity, representation, and community-driven development.

MEET OUR NXT PODCAST BOOTCAMPER

**Eslien Tsuses**

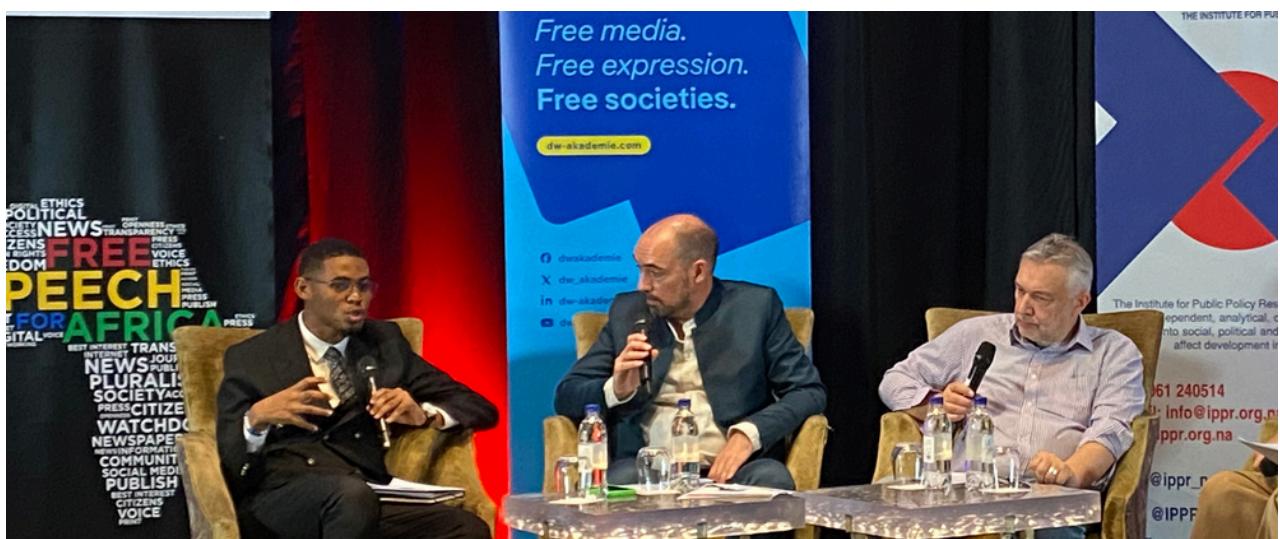
NAMIBIA

Ignite Talk amplifies rural Namibian voices discussing solutions for development challenges like food, land, water, and energy. It bridges policy and lived experience to inspire equitable progress across communities.

21 JULY - 25 JULY

Need more info?

Contact: Shelleygan Petersen  
shelleygan@nxt.africa



**Eco Dialogue Collective Event**, August 2025

We were honoured to participate in the **Eco Dialogue Collective Event**, a platform dedicated to strengthening public policy discourse in Namibia. The dialogue brought together journalists, civil-society organisations, youth groups, and community representatives to discuss issues of transparency, accountability, access to information, and community-driven governance.

Our **"From the Ground Up" documentary** was featured during the event, placing rural youth concerns and aspirations firmly at the centre of the national conversation. The screening sparked meaningful discussions on development, marginalisation, and the structural challenges rural communities continue to face, highlighting the importance of using storytelling as a tool for advocacy and social change.

## UPCOMING...



Through our **Ignite Rural Vodcast** and **Ignite Corner**, RuralRise has begun building a platform for youth, community leaders, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss critical issues affecting rural Namibia, from land rights and small-scale mining to sustainable agriculture, education, infrastructure, and climate resilience.

These conversations aim to influence national and regional discourse on rural development, ensuring rural realities shape policies and investments.

**You can sign-up to host one of our coveted Information Sessions in 2026.**

## Contact Us Today!



[More on the Ignite Corner visit.](#)

**RuralRise will focus on activities that strengthen our strategic direction in 2026; here are exciting plans you can look forward to:**

- Expand the FTGU program to reach more rural youth across 3 regions.
- Launch the Ignite Rural Vodcast series and collaborate with organizations committed to decentralizing and strengthening rural community development.
- Strengthen partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, donors, and the private sector to mobilize resources for rural infrastructure, education, sustainable agriculture, and small business support.
- Strengthen the Youth-Led Rural Development Network (RYN) for peer learning, mentorship, and joint community project implementation across regions.
- Launch periodic monitoring & support mechanisms to ensure sustainability of community-led projects, minimizing risk of collapse after start-up.

## SPONSORS CORNER

**OUR WORK WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU.**

**RuralRise** and the **Utuseb Rural Youth Network** extend heartfelt appreciation to the **Topnaar Traditional Authority in Utuseb** for generously sponsoring the medals for the Soccer Tournament held at Utuseb on 25 October 2025.

Your support strengthened the event and encouraged our rural youth. Thank you for partnering with us in empowering young people.

### Join us in empowering rural communities

To support our programmes, collaborate on meaningful initiatives, and help create opportunities where they are needed most contact us at [ruralriseup@yahoo.com](mailto:ruralriseup@yahoo.com)

## GET INVOLVED



2025 was a pivotal year for RuralRise one of deeper engagement, louder youth voices, and concrete community impact. Our journey has reaffirmed our belief: **real change begins from rural communities themselves when they are empowered, celebrated, and given space to lead.**

We look forward to 2026 with hope, determination, and commitment to build more bridges, transform rural landscapes, and unlock opportunities for Namibia's rural youth.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let's continue Rising Together.



## Message from our Board



**Mr. Olsen Hamana**  
Finance Director

Reflecting on our journey since 2023, I am proud of the impact RuralRise has achieved through strong partnerships, accountability, and shared commitment.

As I continue my term for another year, I invite our donors, partners, and stakeholders to keep investing in rural potential and walking this journey with us.

Together, we can deliver sustainable impact where it matters most."

**Olsen Hamana**  
Finance Director, RuralRise

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### Board Service & Transition (2023–2025)

Since 2023, the our Board of Directors has served the organization with dedication, integrity, and commitment across various leadership and advisory capacities. During this formative period, the Board provided strategic direction, governance oversight, and steadfast support that helped shape RuralRise into a growing and credible platform for rural community empowerment.



**Ms. Mariana Ngola**  
Program Expert



**Mr. Jerome Piet Boois**  
Project Director



**Ms. Monaliza Tsuses**  
Operations Director



**Mr. Olsen Hamana**  
Project Manager/Finance  
Director



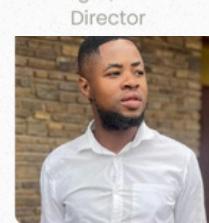
**Ms. Ndahafa Hapulile**  
Legal Director



**Ms. Jessica Uiras**  
Communications  
Director



**Mr. Pinehas Nakaziko**  
Fundraising Director



**Mr. Enos Eliakim**  
Monitoring and  
Evaluations' Director

As we conclude this term in 2025, some Board members will be stepping away to pursue other endeavors, while others continue their service into the next phase of our journey. We extend our sincere appreciation to every board member for their invaluable contributions, guidance, and belief in the RuralRise vision.

We are deeply grateful for those who have walked with us during these foundational years, and we remain excited about the next five years of growth, impact, and transformation. We look forward to the continued guidance of those remaining and celebrate the tenfold contributions of those departing, whose influence will remain part of RuralRise's story.

Together, their leadership has laid a strong foundation for what lies ahead.

We look forward to 2026 with hope, determination, and commitment to build more bridges, transform rural landscapes, and unlock opportunities for Namibia's rural youth.

## Authors Note



**Ms. Emma Israel**  
Communications Officer

Emma Israel is the Communications Volunteer at RuralRise. She has been with the organization since December 2024, where she handles content creation, social media management, storytelling, and digital outreach for our programmes and community initiatives.

She is a passionate communicator with a strong interest in amplifying rural voices and showcasing the resilience, creativity, and leadership emerging from Namibia's rural communities.

We rely on the dedication of volunteers like her, and we recognize and extend our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable passion, time, and expertise they bring to our mission. Their contributions fuel our work and strengthen our impact across the country.

## CONTACT US

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**Ms. Juliet Bindu**  
Operations and Programs  
Consultant



**Ms. Alina Mbango**  
Donor Relations and  
Partnerships Manager



**Ms. Saarti P. Iiyambo**  
Administration and Project  
Associate



**Ms. Magdalena Amutanya**  
Program Assistant Volunteer  
(NUST)



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