



# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

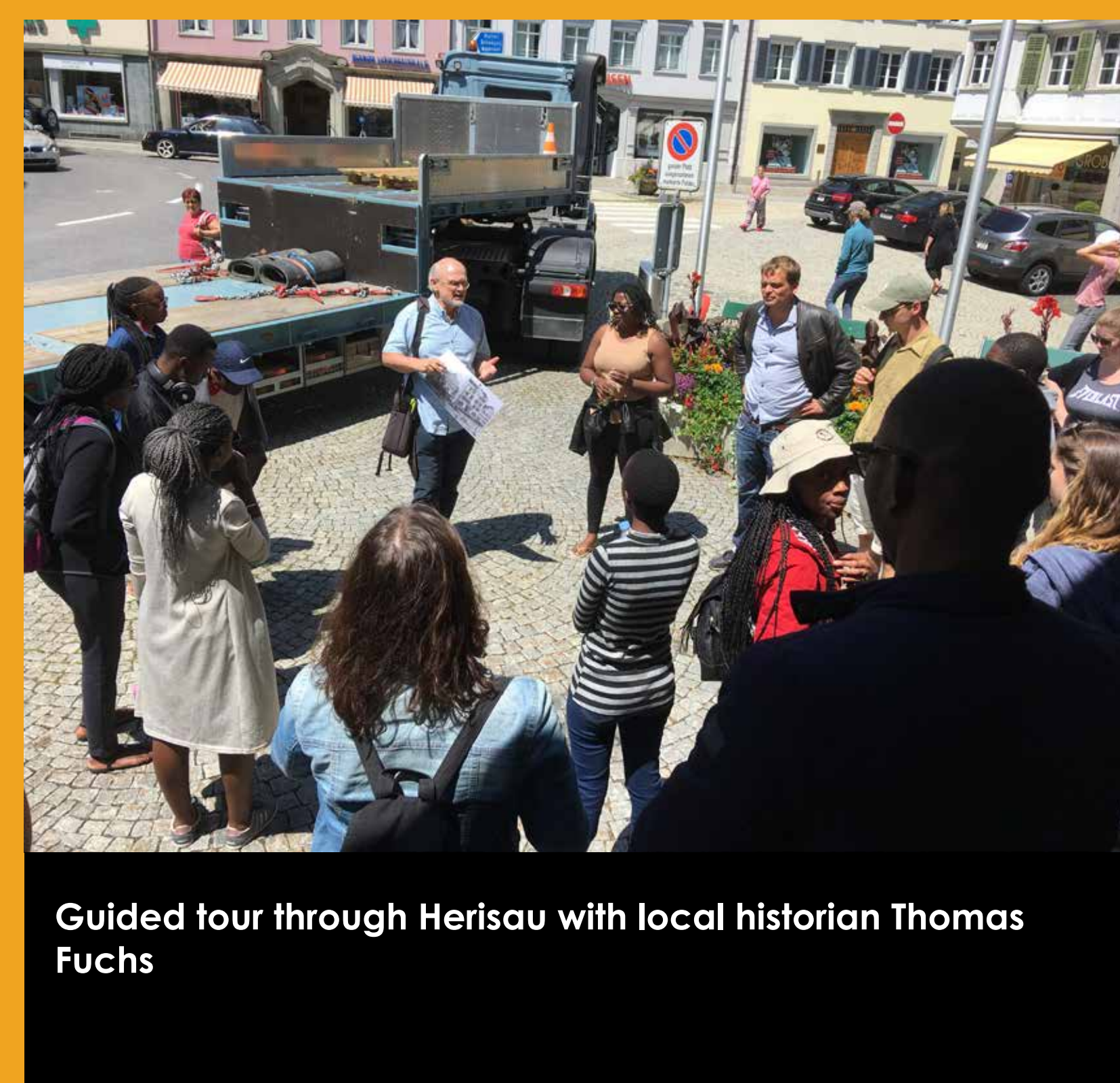
## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

The project “Learning for (Ex)Change” develops and implements innovative forms of international collaboration in teaching among universities from Switzerland and Namibia. In 2019, this took place in the form of a Summer/Winter School that sought to understand small town transformation in Namibia and Switzerland. In June, the group visited Oranjemund (Namibia) and the following month Appenzell and Herisau (Switzerland). Nine students and three “young professionals” from Namibia worked together with seven students from and two “young professionals” from Switzerland. The students and lecturers covered a wide range of academic disciplines. This provided a unique and diverse platform for international exchange and turned the Winter/Summer School into a highly interdisciplinary project. The entire group spent four weeks together – two in each country. During this time, the participants observed, collected material and information and talked to relevant people to find out more about their specific topics in the two countries. These were food production, main economic sector(s), built environment, tourism, and future and visions.

The Summer/Winter school offered a unique experience of working in an international group of students and young professionals, and had the overall goal to serve as a model in South-North cooperation in learning and teaching. We would like to thank the people of Oranjemund, Appenzell and Herisau for the kind reception and their openness to answer our many questions.



The participants of the Summer/Winter School in Oranjemund with the Mayor Henry Edward Coetzee



Guided tour through Herisau with local historian Thomas Fuchs



Sunset close to Oranjemund: Participants taking pictures of the farm Beauvalon on the South African side of the river. Beauvalon was once the centre of food production for Oranjemund.



Participants invited to a live radio show on the collaborative project by the Namibian Broadcasting Company (NBC)



Welcome braai for the Namibian participants in Basel, Switzerland



Farm visit in Waldstatt (Appenzell-Ausser Rhoden) hosted by the Frischknecht family

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### SUPPORTED BY:

Stiftung Mercator Schweiz, Green Leaves Education Foundation, University of Namibia, University of Basel

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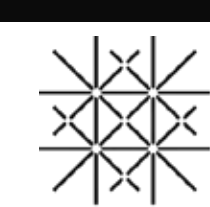
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STIFTUNG  
MERCATOR  
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Green Leaves Education Foundation

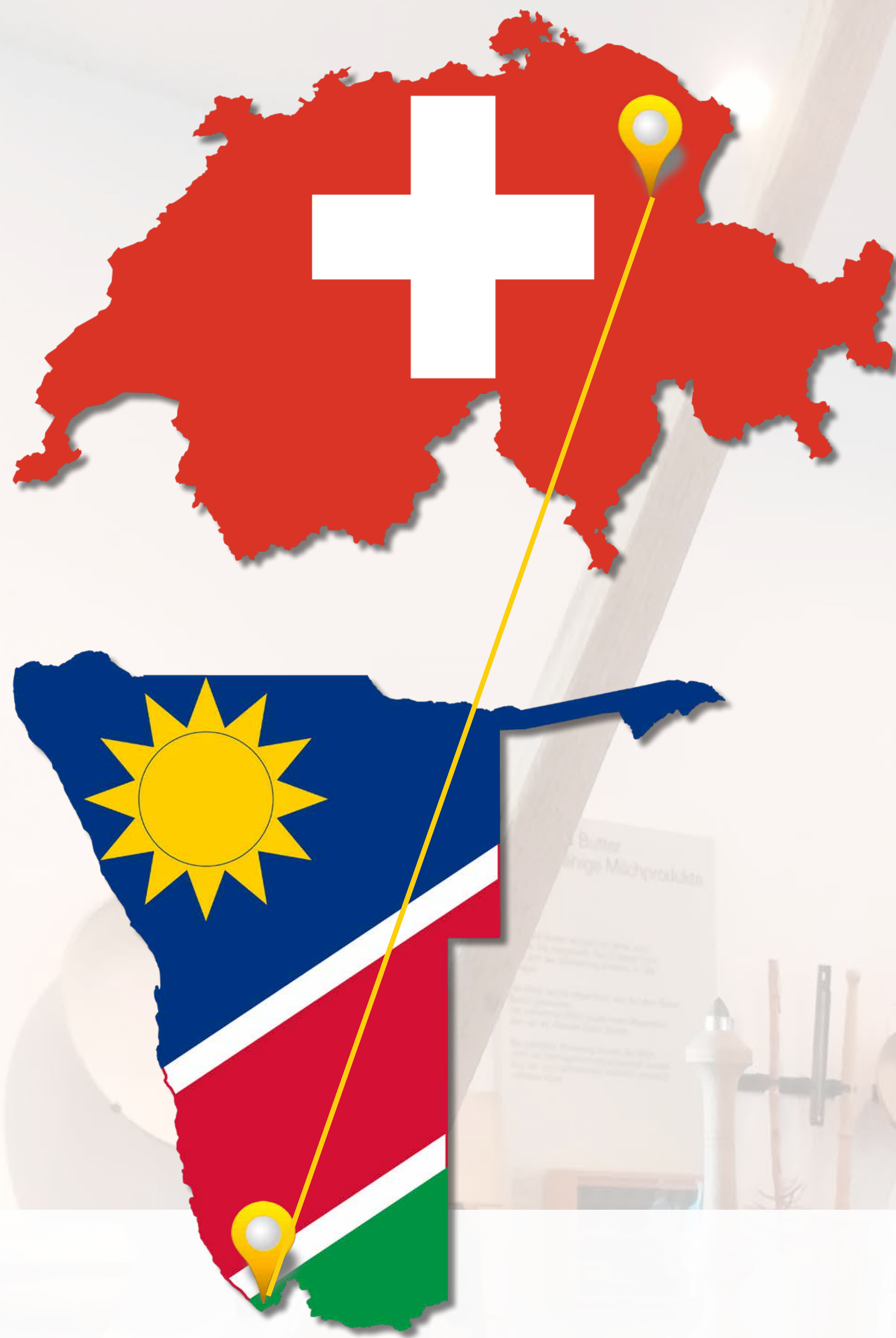


University  
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# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### PROCESS

We drew our material and information from sources such as interviews with town officials and inhabitants, observations in guided and unguided tours, town archives, and online research.

### FINDINGS

Oranjemund and Appenzell are comparable in size and certain characteristics as small towns. In general, we were concerned with comparing the two examples while not taking one as a model for the other. Structurally, there are a number of differences which have grown historically and which made a direct comparison of the two towns difficult. Nevertheless, we found that a walk around a small town and a precise look at houses, infrastructure, and the perception of everyday rhythms can already tell us a lot about a place. Facades can tell stories and histories about people and economic structures just like a design plan in an archive can.



Okawe Village in Oranjemund – A former residential area for black mineworkers with a low Paterson grade



A typical 'Appenzeller' house: In Appenzell Ausserrhoden, most farmhouses accommodated housing, a stable, and a basement with large windows to combine living, farming and textile work.

“Our group dedicated itself to the topics of town planning, transport infrastructure, monument conservation, water and waste management, land ownership and housing.”



In Oranjemund, all houses had been built and distributed in a comprehensive scheme according to the organization of the mining company, called 'Paterson Grading System'. The picture on the right shows a house for a white employee of the diamond mine with a middle to high Paterson grade..



The 'Landesarchiv' in Appenzell provided insight into the (historical) practice of renovating protected houses in Appenzell as this photographic documentation shows.

### TEAM:

- Johanna Ndahekeleleka Nghishiko, Student, Namibia
- Ndaepewoshali Ndahafa Ashipala, Young Professional, Namibia
- Tim Rüdiger, Student, Switzerland
- Xiya Lu, Student, Switzerland





# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

# TOURISM

“

We aimed at getting a direct insight into the development, transformation process and current state of Oranjemund and the Appenzell region regarding the role of tourism.

”

### PROCESS

Our practical approach consisted of collecting qualitative data through extensive interviews and combine it with our direct experience of the respective places.

### FINDINGS

Tourism has a completely different status in Oranjemund and Appenzell. The differences are so fundamental that it becomes difficult to make concrete comparisons. Appenzell is well connected to public transport and is centrally located in within the reach of many large cities. This made it more easy to become a tourist destination than in the case of a remote town. Oranjemund is far away from any other substantial town and has no public transport. Tourism is best promoted when a location offers a variety of attractions (e.g culture, sports, nature experiences, culinary variety, history). In Appenzell, such attractions are well established. Oranjemund, too, offers a spectacular location (a green coastal town in the middle of a huge desert) but has not yet developed its potential as tourist attractions.



Stolzenfels, outside Oranjemund: Ruins of the former German border post and a deserted campsite in the background.



The village of Gonten, outside the town of Appenzell



Main road in the town of Appenzell

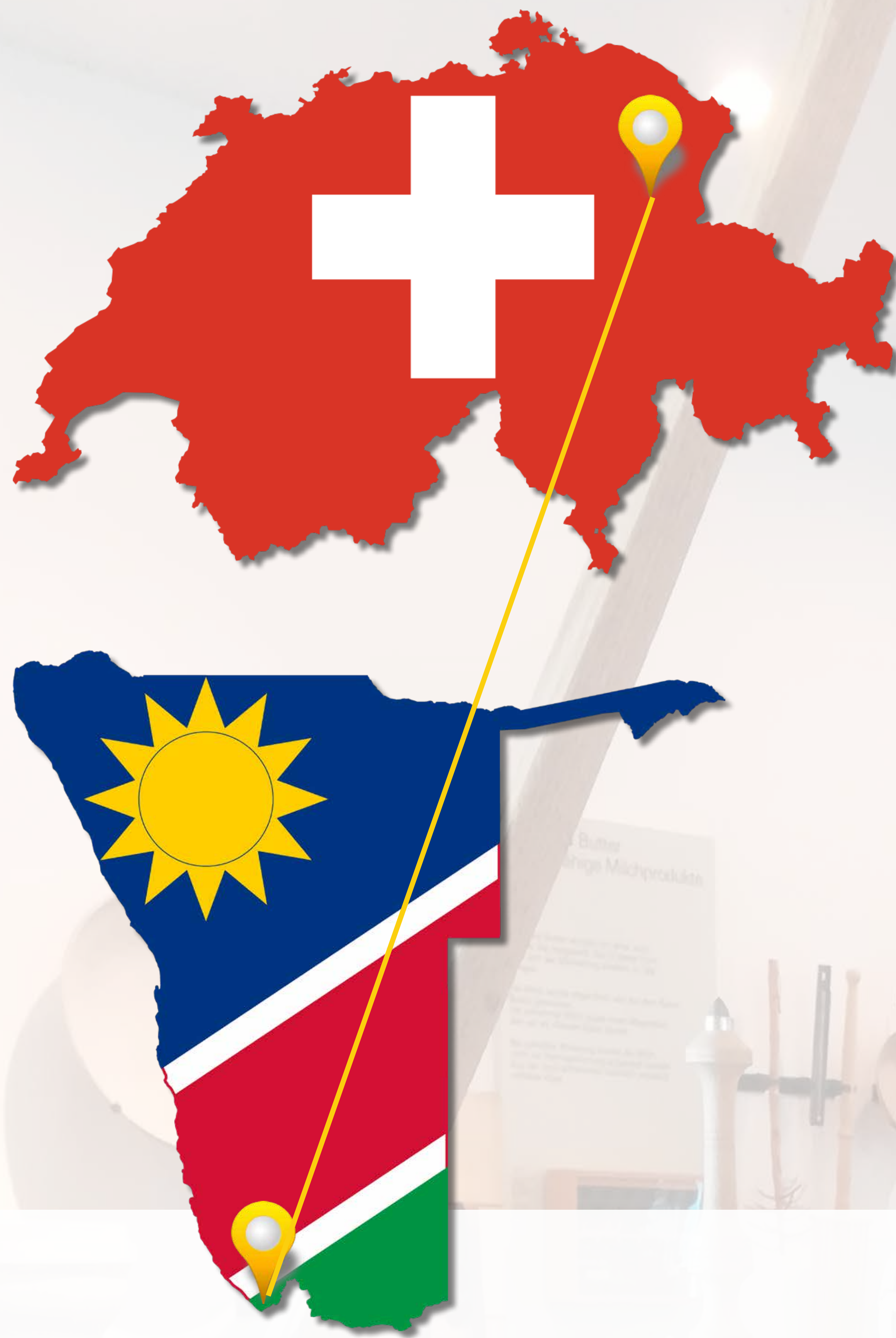


Oranjemund Airport: Oranjemund can be reached from Cape Town and Windhoek several times a week.

#### TEAM:

- Stina Geiser, Student, Switzerland
- Arthur Kambambi, Student, Namibia
- Julia Kubik, Young Professional, Switzerland
- Tautiko Mungandjera, Student, Namibia
- Alissa Ueberwasser, Student, Switzerland





# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

## MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS



One of the Namibian lecturers learning to make cheese the "traditional" way. Today, Appenzeller cheese is an important business in the region and exported worldwide. It is marketed as a product of an idealized, alpine farming culture.



View into the diamond mining area around Oranjemund. Barbed wire fences enforce the control. Since its foundation, Oranjemund's economy is fully dependent on diamond mining.



Old embroidery machine in a museum close to Herisau. Textile industry was central to the region's economy until the 20th century.



Advertisement on a central blackboard in Oranjemund. The expected closure of the mine in the near future impacts the real estate market. A former accommodation complex for workers is for sale to potential new investors.

“ We looked at the transformation of the main economic sector(s). In Appenzell we focused on economic transformations of the 20th century, as well as the current situation. In Oranjemund, the focus was on current uncertainties and future possibilities of the economic landscape. ”

## PROCESS

In Oranjemund, we interviewed several people from Namdeb, OMD 2030, the Special Purpose Vehicle, the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, and small shops. In Appenzell, we talked to the town archivist, the CEO of the biggest company in town, the head of the cantonal Economics Department, and a local historian. In both places, further observations were conducted via town tours and talking to people on the streets.

## FINDINGS

Both towns have experienced or are currently going through structural change due to the (impending) decline of the main economic sector. Therefore, the uncertainties felt by the inhabitants are similar. However, the financial situation in Switzerland is very different from the one in Namibia. While there are lots of investors and funds available to open up new businesses in Appenzell, this is not the case in Oranjemund.

### TEAM:

- Wanda Rutishauser, Student, Switzerland
- Randy Mwatondange, Student, Namibia
- Kingdom Karuwo, Student, Switzerland
- Dené Kisting, Young Professional, Namibia





# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

## FOOD PRODUCTION

### PROCESS

We talked to shop owners, searched the cantonal archive in Appenzell-Innerrhoden and talked to as many people as possible, who could tell us anything about the history and the current situation of food production.

### FINDINGS

The most apparent finding was that Oranjemund is and probably will be strongly dependent on South Africa regarding its food supply. This was not always the case, as Oranjemund got vegetable, meat and dairy products from farms along the river, owned by the mine. Today there are plans to relaunch food production in Oranjemund. This should contribute to the diversity of the local economy. The cantons of Appenzell are also dependent on the import of food. However, livestock farming, cheese, beer and liquor production continues to flourish as part of a diversified economy. It was difficult to compare the two towns because of their different economic contexts, climate conditions and the fact, that Appenzell has a much longer history of food production than Oranjemund.

“ We looked at food production in both towns. The main focus lied on the supply and distribution of food and the history of food production and what it meant for the towns. ”



Greenhouse in Oranjemund, pilot project by NAMDEB.



Deserted butchery on the South African side of the Orange River

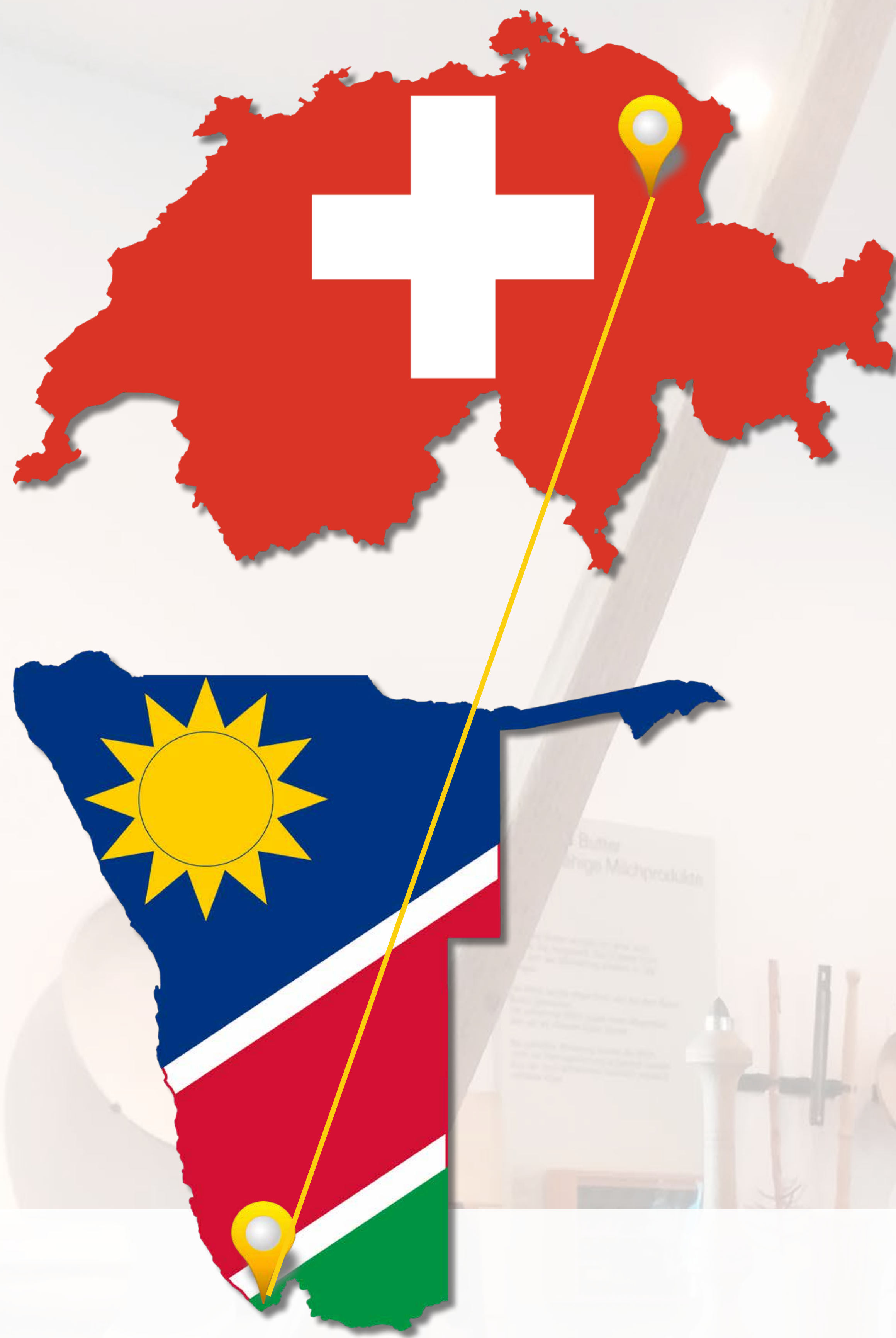


Trailers in front of the main brewery in Appenzell

### TEAM:

- Justina Nangolo, Student, Namibia
- Raquel Garcia, Student, Switzerland
- Gloria Tjitombo, Student, Namibia
- Emaigne Ockhuizen, Young Professional, Namibia





# LEARNING FOR (EX)CHANGE

## SMALL TOWN TRANSFORMATION IN NAMIBIA AND SWITZERLAND

### FUTURE AND VISIONS

#### PROCESS

On our field visits to the two towns we conducted interviews with various stakeholders involved in the town's transformation processes or over-seeing town development. We interviewed the stakeholders at their workplaces.

#### FINDINGS

Many people in the canton of Appenzell-Innerrhoden are proud of a long history of direct political participation for their male citizens. Meanwhile, Oranjemund only established a democratic administrative system by the instalment of a town council in 2011/2012. Oranjemund's main challenge is how to become less dependent on the mining industry. First steps towards economic diversification consist of investment in tourism and desert agriculture. The town council wants more and envisions developing properties and attracting high-tech industries. Some residents, though, doubt that Oranjemund would survive a closure of the mine.

Appenzell has already gone through various economic transitions, which resulted in an economic diversification including high-tech industries, farming, food manufacturing, and tourism. Most producers in Appenzell had to concentrate on highly specialized products for niche markets or the production of unique local products. It is the general vision in Appenzell that continuing this path can secure constant economic growth.

“

We aimed at understanding differences and similarities in the plans and visions for the future in Oranjemund and Appenzell. We focused on the administrative support system and the economic diversification of the two towns.

”



Will there be new economic activities in the huge but defunct old power station of Oranjemund?



Cattle farming in the Appenzellerland. Agriculture still remains an important aspect of the areas identity, although it will probably not be the region's economic future.



Oranjemund 2030, a community organization set up to facilitate the town transformation and envision a future for 2030.



An advertising of a large grocery shop chain, using the picture of the traditional "Alpabzug" (bringing back the cattle from the high-pasture).

#### TEAM:

- Mechilde Pinto, Student, Namibia
- Loini Amwaama, Student, Namibia
- Dany Lutz, Young Professional, Switzerland