

9TH NATIONAL ICT SUMMIT • ONGWEDIVA, NAMIBIA

Harnessing ICT for Inclusive Growth

Digital Pathways to Reduce Unemployment and Eradicate Poverty

Keynote focus: Artificial Intelligence, Youth Opportunity & Namibia's Digital Future

Dr. Mbangula Lameck Amugongo

Computer Scientist | AI/ML expert | Tech Activist

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ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mbangula Lameck Amugongo (PhD)

Computer Scientist & AI/ML expert 13+ years across telecom, academia and pharmaceutical industry



Education

- PhD in Cancer Sciences University of Manchester, UK
- MSc, Computer Science NUST
- Bachelor (Hons) in Software development (**Cum Laude**) PoN
- B.IT: Software Engineering PoN



Professional Background

- Senior Agentic AI consultant (Boehringer Ingelheim)
- Postdoc Researcher in AI/ML in clinical development (Boehringer Ingelheim)
- Researcher—trustworthy AI for diabetes care (TUM)
- Lecturer: AI, Data Science & Software Engineering—NUST
- BI Analyst—Telecom Namibia



Research Interests

- AI Ethics & Explainable AI
- Data Science
- Digital Health & Digital Transformation

I love applied research♥



Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and analysis expressed in this presentation are my own, based on independent research and professional experience. They do not represent the official position, policy, or opinion of my employer.

What we will cover

1 The Unemployment Reality

2 The Technology & AI Wave

3 Myth vs Reality: Are Jobs Really Disappearing?

4 The Numbers: AI Job Creation Worldwide

5 New Jobs, New Skills

6 Localising the Opportunity for Namibian Youth

7 What Namibia Must Do and the Pathways Forward

8 Key Takeaways & Conclusion

THE UNEMPLOYMENT REALITY

The sad reality

36.9%

320,442 unemployed individuals out of an active labour force of 867,247

NSA, 2025

71.1%

of Namibia's population is under the age of 35

NSA, 2025

Youth (15–24) Unemployment Rate, Namibia 2018–2025 (%)

44%



Only 252,886 employed out of 576,624 (active)
?? 10th highest of 187 countries tracked globally

NSA, 2025; World Bank, 2025

These numbers are not just economic statistics

- Behind every percentage is a young person trying to build a future.
- Namibia needs pathways from education → skills → work → enterprise.
- The question is whether ICT can accelerate those pathways.

2,200 employed in the ICT sector

CRAN quarterly bulletin, 2026

THE TECHNOLOGY WAVE

While we grappling with unemployment—> the AI race is on

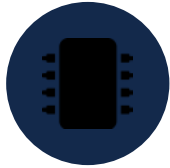
AI is advancing faster than any technology before it



\$2.52 trillion

forecast worldwide AI spending in 2026
— up 44% year-on-year

Gartner, 2026



\$225.8 billion

record global AI investment in 2025
alone

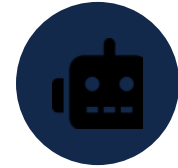
Stanford HAI, AI Index 2025



88%

of organisations worldwide now use AI
in at least one business function

Stanford HAI, AI Index 2026



900 million

weekly ChatGPT users by Feb 2026 —
more than double a year earlier

Stanford HAI, AI Index 2026

This is the wave Namibia must ride—we cannot be left behind.



LET'S CHECK IN

Which AI tool have you used this month?

- ☐ ChatGPT, Claude or a similar AI assistant
- ☐ An AI-powered banking or mobile money app
- ☐ AI customer-service chat
- ☐ None of the above

MYTH VS REALITY

Is AI really taking our jobs?



My honest answer is more complex.

Short answer:

NO.

JOBS WILL CHANGE

- Some tasks will disappear.
- Some roles will be redesigned.
- Almost every profession will be touched by AI.



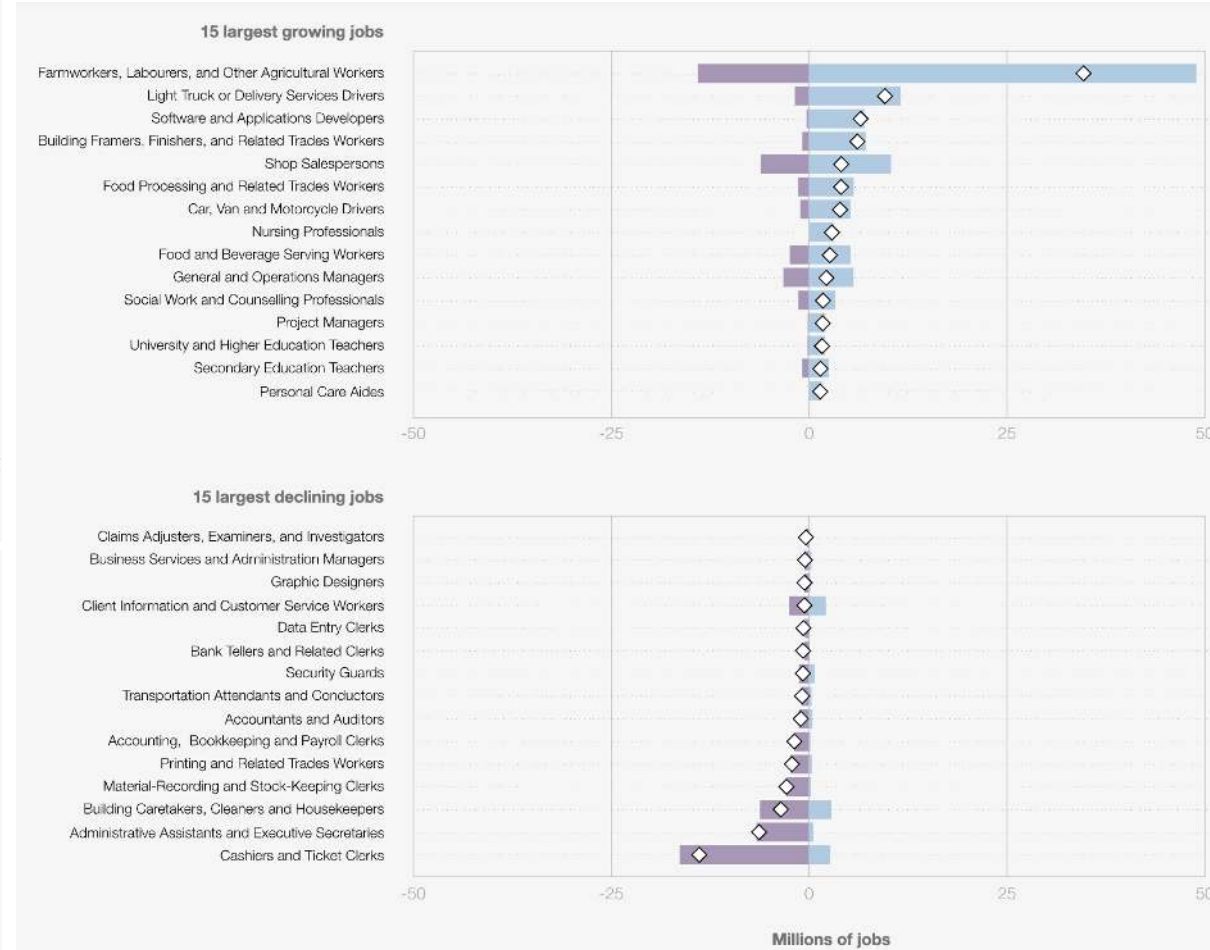
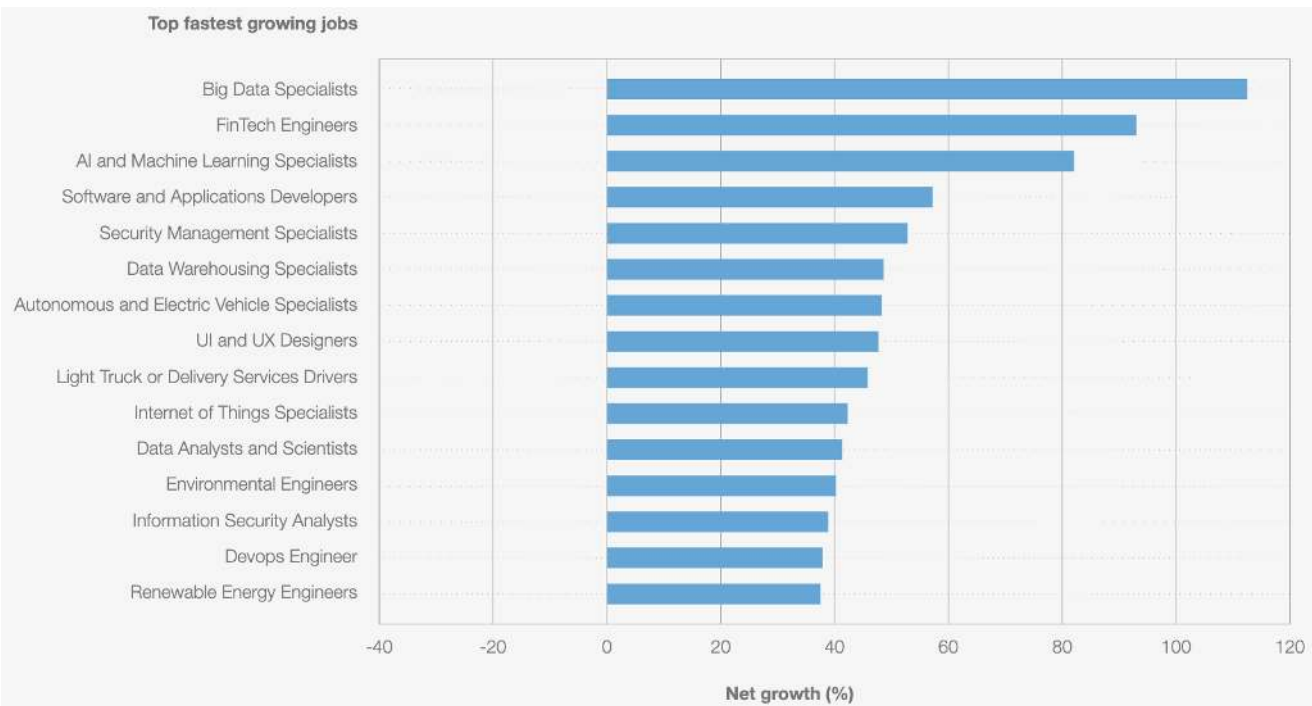
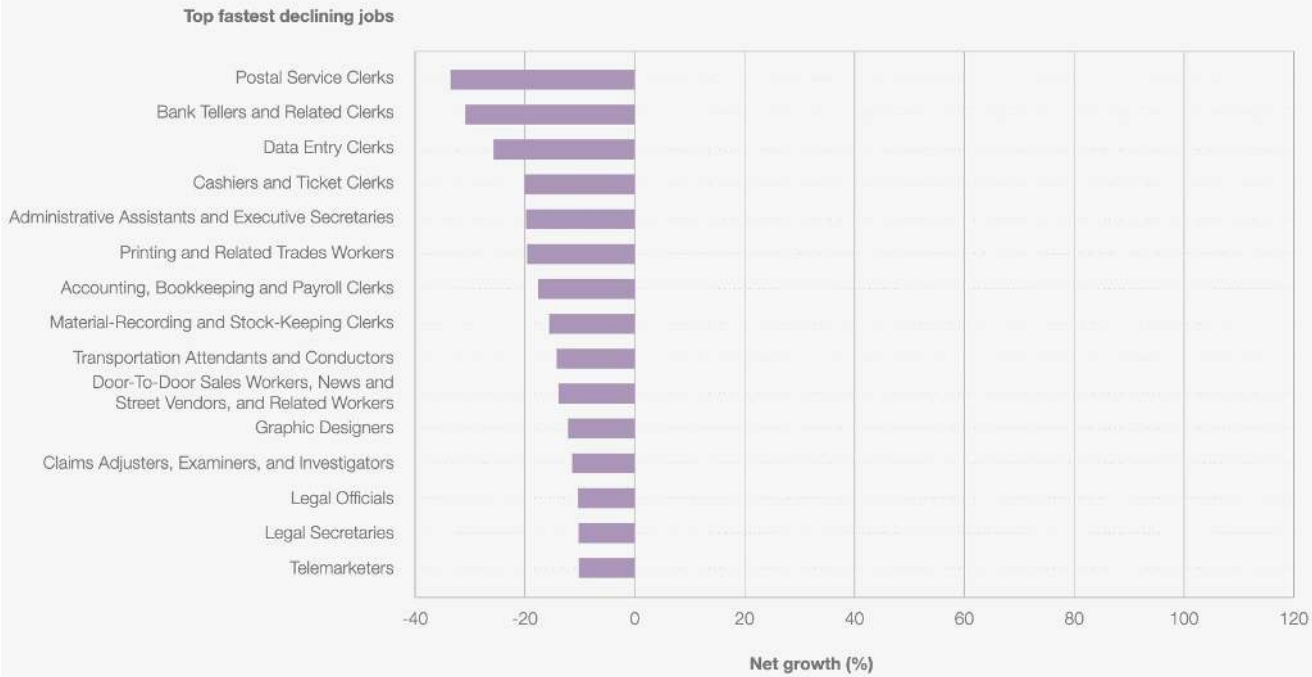
NEW WORK WILL EMERGE

- New occupations and services.
- Human + AI teams.
- New businesses built around new capabilities.

The pattern: AI mostly automates repetitive, rule-based tasks:

- not human judgement, creativity or care.

Global job "churn" from AI is real (22% of jobs by 2030), but it is a redistribution, not a wipe-out.



THE NUMBERS

AI Job Creation, Worldwide

1.3M

New AI-related roles added worldwide in the past three years : AI Engineers, Forward-Deployed Engineers, Data Annotators

LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2026

600K+

New AI-enabled data-centre jobs created since 2023

LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2026

+143%

Year-on-year growth in "AI Engineer" job postings

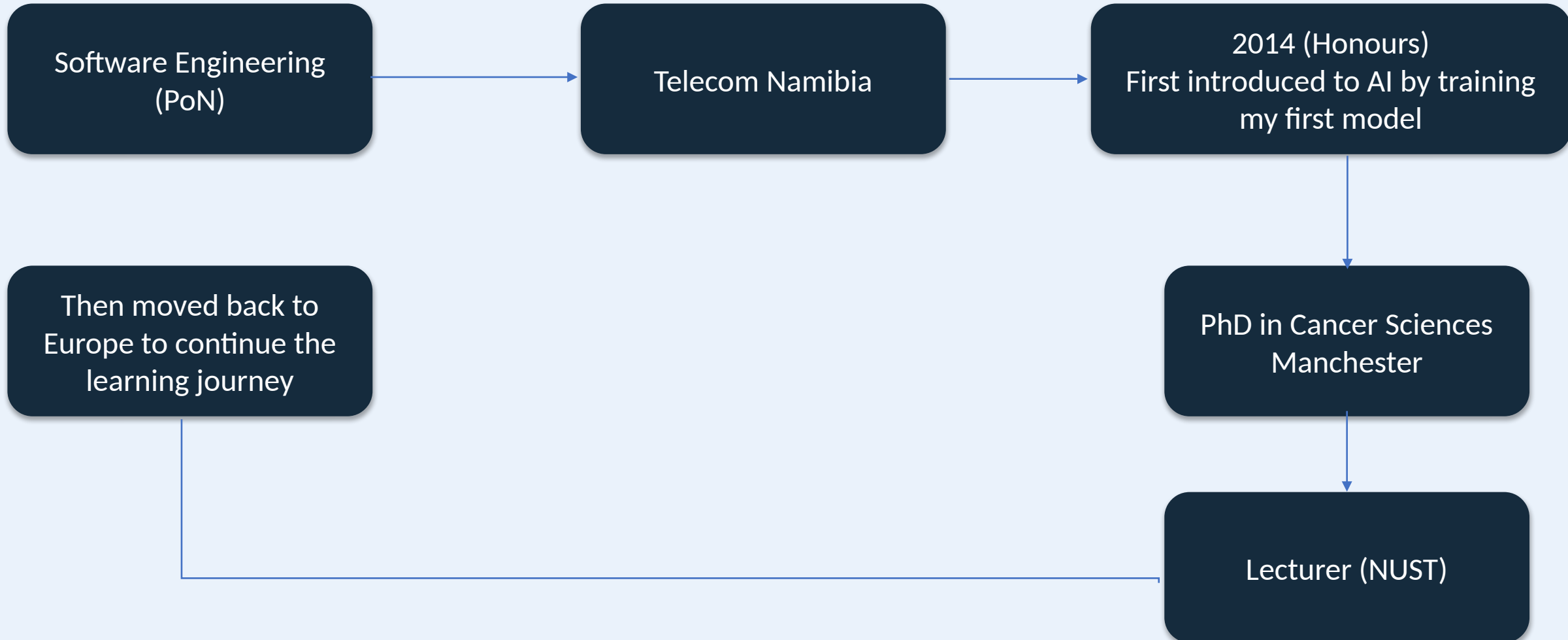
LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2026

World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025

NEW JOBS, NEW SKILLS

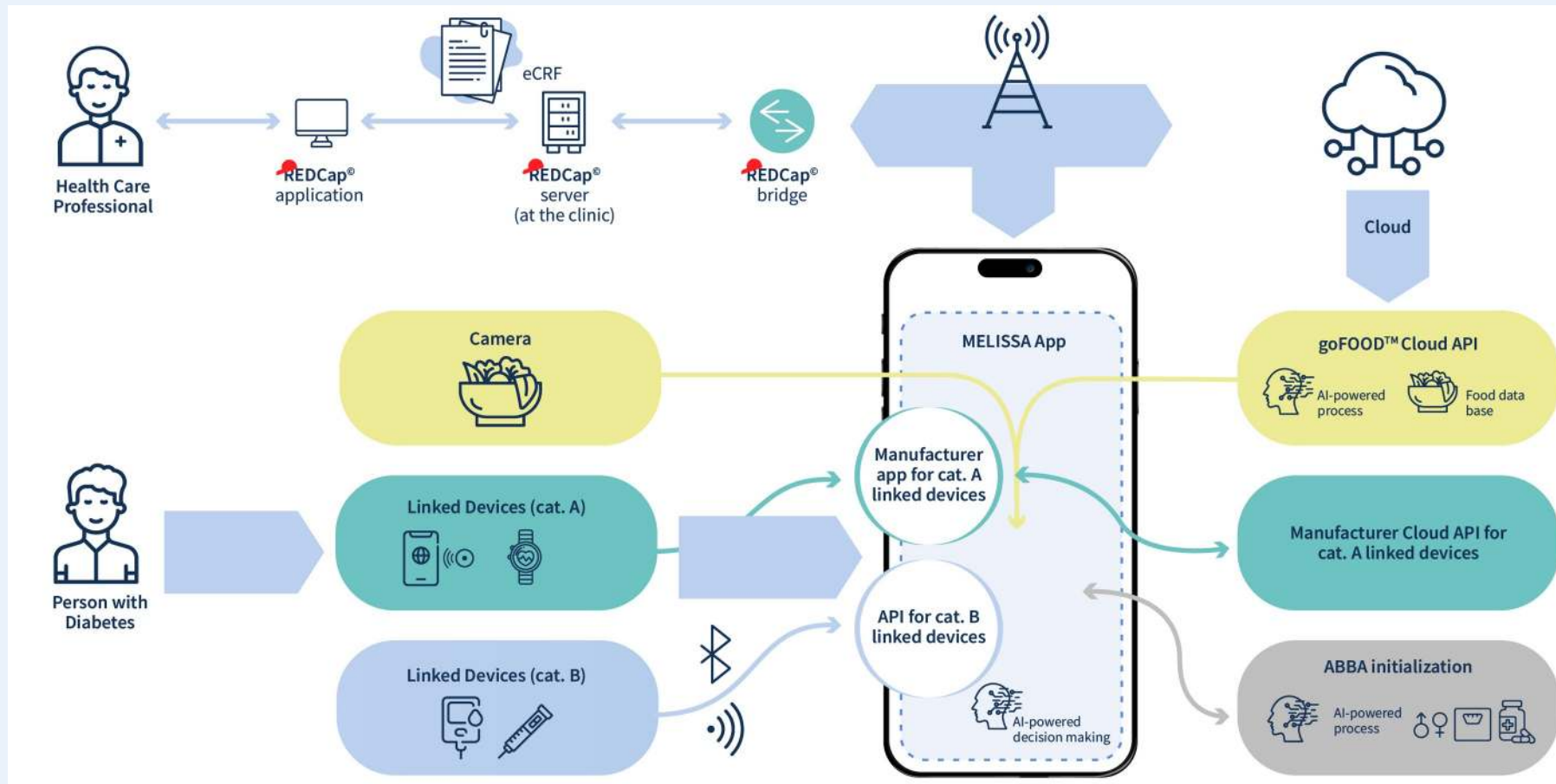
The new jobs demand new, but these skills are learnable

- I have walked this journey



Melissa

AI-enabled diabetes management



The bottom line: Skills: not job titles or degrees alone are becoming the new currency of employability!!

AI is only as good as the data — and the context

Build local datasets → local platforms → local expertise → local IP → local jobs

LOCALISING THE OPPORTUNITY

Contextualised AI can help deliver NDP6



Agriculture

Precision farming, drought & yield prediction for Namibia's farmers

Kenya and other African countries are doing this—We can learn from them



Health

AI-assisted diagnostics & telemedicine reaching rural clinics

Yes our hospitals/clinics are not there yet but we can upgrade facilities at same time with tech advancements



Financial Inclusion

AI-driven credit scoring & fraud detection for the unbanked



Digital & Remote Work

Data annotation, AI engineering, exportable freelance work from Ongwediva to the world



Language & Culture

Building AI that understands Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab: local data means local jobs

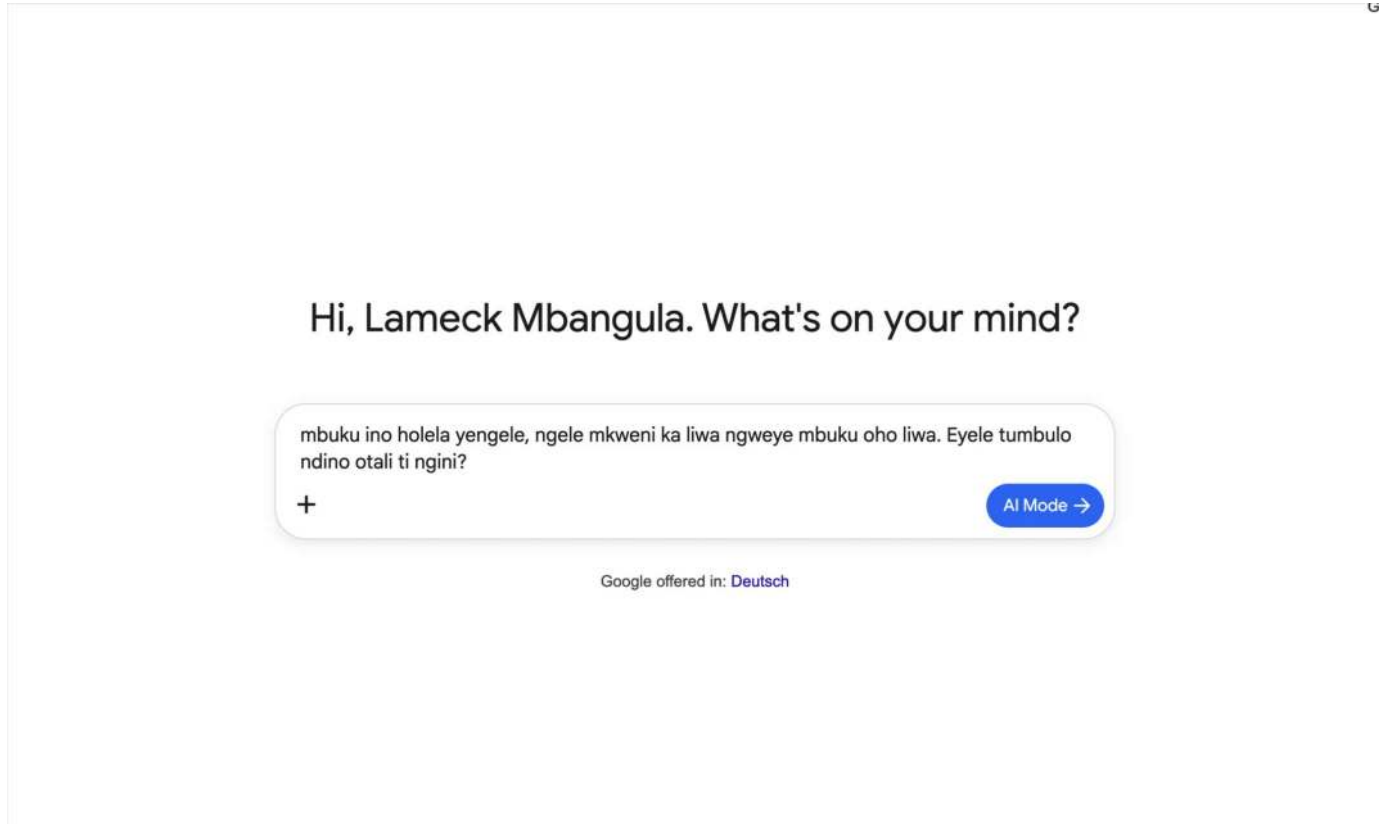


Public Services

AI in e-government, logistics and mining optimisation

Language culture

Many of us use ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or similar language models



Every time our languages and communities are excluded from technology, someone else defines our digital culture.



OVER TO YOU



Few Namibians have deep technical expertise. We need more problem solvers.

What is one digital skill you will commit to learning in the next six months?

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Three pillars for Namibia to benefit from AI



Capacity Building

- Update TVET & university curricula for AI & data skills
- Upskill teachers & lecturers
- Digital literacy from primary school, aligned to NDP6



Funding

- AI is not cheap: compute, data & talent all cost money
- Public-private investment & sovereign AI funds, e.g., AI skills levy
- Diaspora & development-partner financing



Grassroots Innovation

- Hackathons & innovation hubs beyond Windhoek
- Regulatory sandboxes for youth-led startups
- Problem-first, and not tech-first innovation

We also need institutional clarity:

Regulate ≠ fund ≠ implement

Execution belongs with institutions that can research, build, deploy and scale.

PATHWAYS FORWARD

How do we get there as a country?

1



AI and
digitalisation fund

Enough with documents such
strategies etc. Let's identify 3
problems from NDP6: get
budget & set clear timeline

2



Embed AI/Digital
literacy in
education

Starting with teacher training

3



Build regional
innovation hubs

Transform former youth
centres in the regional

4



Forge public-
private-academia
partnerships

NUST, UNAM, government &
industry for applied AI R&D

5



Open youth-
accessible funding

The youth grant is great start.
Remember Silicon Valley was
build by the US military.
So let's fund the
development of own
technology.



Big data Africa School 2026



Group 5: The Fibro 5

BDAS 2026 Teams

Take Away: Let Us Implement



Enough with reports. Readiness is built in classrooms, labs and communities.

Digital pathways out of poverty start with a choice

?? A choice to build, to learn, and to include every young Namibian.

Else our digital future will be built elsewhere.



Thank You

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