

CASE STUDY

Developing the procurement profession in Namibia

Over the last few decades, procurement in Namibia has evolved from being regarded as a clerical function to a profession in its own right. We have attracted professionals from a range of different backgrounds, each bringing their own skills and experiences. Now, the challenge is to ensure that we attract the best and the brightest, whilst continuing to develop the skills of current procurement professionals, to meet the needs of tomorrow's world. Julinda Garus-Ôas, Board Member at the Central Procurement Board of Namibia, shares her experience of raising standards in procurement and her hopes for the future of the profession.

Starting out as a Buyer, Julinda entered the world of procurement without a formal educational background in the discipline, and found her first few steps on the journey challenging: "When I first started in procurement I don't think I fully understood the value of it, but I became very passionate about it and decided to make a career out of it. It was a tough journey because I was a new mum and had to juggle that with a lot of self-study".

The Public Procurement Act No 15 of 2015, brought into force in 2017, ushered in a more formal approach, bringing with it a welcome improvement in accountability, transparency and openness. Building on this, there is now a call for us to push the profession further by...



Working with stakeholders to raise the profile of procurement, so that it is no longer seen as a function within finance or logistics



Proactively developing ourselves as individuals, by learning where we fit into the organisational context and how we can contribute to the value chain



Investing in capability development at an organisational level, with quality training and best practice approaches that formalise the skills we learn 'on the job'



Engaging talented university students in conversations about procurement, to help them recognise that it is a rewarding and impactful profession full of opportunity



Building professional networks, such as the CIPS Namibia branch

There was also the challenge of applying guidance designed for UK professionals to the local context: it was not always immediately applicable or relevant to her day-to-day work. On the other hand, the excitement of working in a new, constantly evolving and 'real' profession made up for it: rather than dealing with historical data, she was 'thrown into the deep end' and learned to manage suppliers and stakeholders early on.

Looking to the future, Julinda is looking forward to contributing to capacity development and advocating the professionalisation of procurement professionals:



Namibia needs to recognise procurement as a profession in the public sector. The professionalisation of public procurement is a complex process that will require the collaboration of various actors.

She is also striving to promote sustainable and ethical procurement in the region.

One final piece of advice from Julinda suggests that we can elevate the profession, together, by pushing ourselves as individuals: "Be proactive, be a go-getter. Always try to seek out new opportunities. Read more, develop yourself and empower yourself. Life moves fast and it's up to you to bring yourself up to speed."

Julinda is the Branch Chairperson on the CIPS Namibia branch that was very recently constituted, a first for Namibia. Julinda is a strong advocate of professionalisation. She achieved her MCIPS by travelling to the UK to complete her final exams.



A huge thank you to Julinda Garus-Ôas, Board Member at the Central Procurement Board of Namibia, for taking the time to share her story with us and provide key learnings for all of us within the procurement profession.