



THE JOURNEY STARTED THEN
SUDDENLY ENDED
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Elina Amadhila graduated in Business Administration at the University of Namibia in 2009 and obtained her PhD at the Stellenbosch University Business School in 2016. She is now a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Commerce, Management & Law at the University of Namibia, where she has been a faculty member since 2018. Her research interests lie in the area of development finance with a particular emphasis on the finance aspect of agricultural businesses and social protection. Her research at Wiko has focused on coupling social protection with youth interest in agriculture in Namibia, but she has collaborated actively with researchers in several other disciplines of education, disability studies, and tourism. Her latest publication focuses on “Are social protection grants alleviating poverty among vulnerable groups in Namibia? – The case of older persons and persons with disabilities,” and she just published her edited book on teaching and learning with digital technologies during COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of her research papers can be found in journals such as the *African Review of Economics and Finance*, *Cogent Education*, *Harvard Africa Policy Journal*, and *Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, among others. – Address: University of Namibia, Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. E-mail: eamadhila@unam.na.

On the 2nd of April 2022, I arrived in Berlin around noon (to stay for three months) and was welcomed by the ever so friendly and patient Vera Pfeffer at Villa Walther. I was excited yet nervous about the weather as to whether I had packed enough clothes to keep me warm? I made a deliberate decision to visit Berlin during the last three months of the academic year when it was not too cold (or so I thought), hence my nervousness about the

weather. Nonetheless, the weather was cold during the early days when I arrived (I ended up buying one more jacket and boots), but of course, it became much warmer later. It is 36 degrees Celsius today (27 June 2022) as I write this report. Too sad that it is getting much warmer when I am about to return to a very cold Namibia.

On the 3rd of April 2022, I walked to the Wissenschaftskolleg (Wiko) for the first time, had a small tour of the Kolleg, and met very wonderful, kind people. Two days later, I went to the bank to open a bank account, and it took much longer than I had anticipated (a month) to receive the bank card. I was quite disappointed, as this created an inconvenience for me, because I found it difficult to move around as I couldn't buy bus/train tickets on the BVG app and/or buy other cash items, due to not having a local bank card to withdraw cash. I mean, some shops strictly wanted cash, so buying from these shops was impossible and withdrawing cash with my Namibian VISA card from the ATMs in Berlin was very expensive. This all happened before the staff at Wiko decided to give me cash while I waited for the bank card, as neither I nor the staff had known this would happen, so this alternative arrangement was suggested to me only later, after I went through some hurdles. I am glad someone at Wiko thought of a Plan B when Plan A did not work. I will never forget the kind gesture from Fellows like Lars Behrisch who gave me free bus tickets as I waited for my bank card. Thank you, Lars. You were truly kind and I will never forget!

My research at Wiko focused on coupling social protection with youth interest in agriculture in Namibia. When I arrived at Wiko, I had only about three pages of the paper and was not sure exactly what direction to take. However, my plan was that I would develop a full research article while at Wiko in time for my Tuesday Colloquium (7 June 2022). The library was very efficient in providing all the books I needed when I needed them. I managed to submit the paper to *Development in Practice Journal* during my stay. Although the journal editor has shown interest in my work, I was requested to address a few issues before sending the paper for peer review (as is the nature of most good journals), and this is what I am busy with at the time of writing this report. The comments I received from other Fellows during my colloquium presentation and from the editor of the journal really helped strengthen my paper. Apart from this paper, I was also able to finish and submit my edited book on *Teaching and Learning with Digital Technologies during COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa*. This will be published by Routledge in December 2022. I am happy to have been afforded an intellectual space at Wiko to develop and

present my paper. I will never forget my beautiful apartment in Villa Walther, which had a working space with all the equipment one would need.

I am grateful to have met the wonderful staff at Wiko, who (especially Jana) made every effort to put me in touch with researchers in my field or those who do research closely related to my field. Because of this, I was able to visit the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, specifically the Director of the research unit Institutions and Political Inequality (Prof. Macartan Humphreys) and his colleagues (Alex Sacco and Jonah Foong), who later invited me to a two-day workshop (16–17 June 2022) to provide input to doctoral students' work. It was a great experience, as the workshop was a read-in-advance workshop of papers with no presentations and this was my first time attending a workshop of this nature. I learned a lot! I am also fortunate to have met the Director of the Research Center for Sustainability (FFN) at the Freie Universität (Prof. Philipp Lепенies), who has been very supportive of my work and has agreed to be my host for the Georg Forster Research Fellowship with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation that I am about to submit an application for. I was lucky to meet with the Head of the InsuResilience Solutions Fund (ISF) (in Frankfurt School) that promotes the development of innovative and sustainable climate risk insurance products in developing and emerging countries. We are in talks to expand the project to other countries. This is just the beginning, but the future looks promising. Thank you, Jana, for creating the connections to make sure my short research stay at Wiko was worth it. It really was!

Lastly, I would like to thank the Kitchen staff (Dunia and her team) for their good service and great meals. I enjoyed the sweet stuff (dessert) the most. My family and friends in Namibia informed me it is now colder than it has ever been. I feel like my research journey in Berlin was just starting and suddenly came to an end. I wish I could change my ticket to stay longer than three months in Berlin and enjoy the warm weather until winter is over, but I guess (as they say) all good things come to an end at some point and I must return home to fulfill my job of educating the nation. *“The end of a journey means the beginning of another”* – Silvermist. I will therefore return home with the belief that another exciting one will soon begin.