

MAPPING THE MONTH: FIG YSN AFRICA

FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

Young Surveyor of the Month



CATHRINE MARENGA

"I build confidence through advancing my skills, competences and ethics"

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself and a little bit about your professional identity.

I am Cathrine Marenga, from Namibia. I am the Country Director of the Youth Initiative for Land in Africa (YILAA) Namibia country office. YILAA is an organisation that promotes and empowers youth participation in land governance across its country offices in Africa. I hold a Master's Degree in Spatial Science specialising in Land Administration. I have worked in both civil society and academia and in partnership with developmental agencies and local government, where I have been involved in various programmes and projects on youth land rights, urban development and land and housing delivery. My areas of interest are in urban informality, land policy, land use planning and land tenure security.

2. You started with a Diploma and recently graduated with a Master's degree. What motivates you to keep growing academically? Any challenges?

I like to joke and say school likes me. What motivates me is the pursuit of knowledge. I remain eager to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in my field, to learn and produce meaningful solutions. As a young person who has been consecutively in school for most of my life, it can easily feel as if it all comes too fast and like I am on a carousel, but knowing what I am doing and why I am doing it keeps me committed

3. Through your work in research, advocacy, and community engagement, what impact/project in Namibia are you most proud of so far?

When I think impact, I think societal development. I was part of implementing the Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning project to secure tenure in informal settlements in a town called Okahandja in Namibia. In partnership with the UN-Habitat, Global Land Tool Network, Trimble, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia Housing Action Group/Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia, the Okahandja Municipality and its community, we were able to improve the livelihoods of over 3000 households. Another proud milestone is that YILAA Namibia recently launched the country's first youth and land network with a continental affiliation in over 33 African countries.

4. You're the first YILAA Country Director featured in our bulletins. What message would you like to send to young people aspiring to participate in YILAA initiatives? How can they participate?

YSN and YILAA share a steadfast partnership, which is strengthened on country-level between YSN Namibia and YILAA Namibia. It is therefore an honour to be featured. As a youthful African population, the need for youth inclusion and presence in land governance is pivotal as land matters affect us too. I therefore urge the youth to join YILAA as it provides the platform to position ourselves for inclusive land governance. Reach out to us at contact@yilaa.org if you would like to join, follow our socials and visit our website at www.yilaa.org.

5. You've worked across advocacy, community engagement, and leadership. How do you manage the balance between technical work, advocacy, and your own personal development as you grow in your career?

Whether balance exists is a conversation for another time. However, being aware of my purpose and passion in both my professional and personal settings keeps me on track. Planning and prioritising helps me to navigate both demands, and knowing when to rest in between is equally important.

6. As a woman in land administration and surveying, how have you navigated spaces that are often male-dominated?

I show up and deliver. I build confidence through advancing my skills, competences and ethics so I can eliminate barriers and have presence in the room.

7. What trends do you see shaping the future of land administration and the wider built environment?

Youth-led land administration. We are setting the trends, participating and influencing the built environment, with the support and mentorship of the matured generation.

8. Bonus Question: Which destination is on your travel bucket list, and what draws you to it?

Cape Town. I am drawn by its beautiful landscapes, weather and food scene. Is it not a coincidence that the 2026 joint 10th FIG YSN Conference and YILAA Fifth International Youth and Land Governance Conference (CIGOFA) is happening there?

Upcoming Events

FIG CONGRESS 2026 & 10th Young Surveyors Conference

Registration is now open for the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) World Congress 2026 taking place in Cape Town, South Africa.

Conference Type	Delegate	Young Professional	Student
Main Conference – Normal	14090 ZAR	12915 ZAR	9810 ZAR
Main Conference – Onsite	17495 ZAR	15500 ZAR	11850 ZAR
Young Surveyors Conference – Normal	1850 ZAR	1850 ZAR	1850 ZAR
Young Surveyors Conference – Onsite	N/A	N/A	N/A

For more information and registration categories, please visit:

<https://www.fig.net/fig2026/registration.htm>

Important Deadlines

- Unpaid registrations: All unpaid registrations – or those not secured with a valid Purchase Order – will be cancelled on 16 May 2026.

★ Participants are encouraged to register early and ensure timely payment to secure their place at this global gathering of surveying professionals.

Acknowledgements

This bulletin is produced by the FIG YSN Africa Strategic Committee.

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We sincerely appreciate our talented team for their dedication and invaluable contributions. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to the Young Surveyor of the Month for inspiring us through their interview. As we launch our first issue of 2026, we are excited to begin a new year filled with fresh ideas, shared learning, and meaningful collaboration. We look forward to amplifying new voices, and celebrating the journeys and achievements of young surveyors across our network. May this year bring growth, innovation, and continued excellence to our community.

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