

NaDEET CENTRE TOUR SURVEY REPORT



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Introduction

Although NaDEET is carrying on its activity successfully, the organisation is aware of the fact that as many other NGOs in Namibia, it could also be affected by a lack of funding. Indeed, in the near future Namibian NGOs will have to face increasing funding challenges due to the upgrading of Namibia to an “upper middle income country” which will lead to the reallocation of international donors towards less fortunate countries and the global economic downturn since 2008. Therefore, to ensure a sustainable future for its activities, NaDEET needs to look for other ways of depending less on international funding and differentiate its sources, especially by trying to increase the support from private individuals both at a national and an international level. Being located on a nature reserve where five tourist concessionaires operate, it seems to be obvious to target the tourists visiting the reserve as potential supporters. Shall NaDEET develop a day-long programme taking place during the weekend in order to raise money? Although attracting tourists seem to be a good idea and easy way of increasing incomes, special attention must be given to some factors such as the identification of the right target, the estimation of the amount of time, money and energy spent in organising the offer for tourists, the risk of losing the focus on NaDEET’s first aim. Therefore, since NaDEET already regularly has tourists visiting its Centre, it was decided to conduct a study on the actual financial benefits from the existing relationship with tourism before further developing it.

Objectives

- Improve the Centre tour in order to maximise the financial outcomes.
- Calculate the actual profit made by giving tours of NaDEET Centre.
- Establish if giving tours of NaDEET Centre is worthwhile.

Methodology

1. Observation of the tours.
2. Participation in a Tok Tokkie Trail to better know what the tourists experience before passing by NaDEET Centre.
3. Suggestions on how to improve the tour:
 - New Centre Tour.
 - Guidelines on how to give a tour for new staff members.
 - Give tours in the tourists' mother tongue when possible.
 - Give out NaDEET Newsletter and copies of the *Bush Telegraph* to all of the visitors.
 - Ask the visitors their email addresses to send them the NaDEET's Newsletter.
4. Implementation of the suggestions.
5. Creation of a survey to monitor the effectiveness of the new strategies.
6. Elaboration of results.

The survey

CENTRE TOUR SURVEY

DATE: ____/____/____

WHO HAS GIVEN THE TOUR & IN WHICH LANGUAGE: _____

WEATHER CONDITIONS:

Sunny	Partially cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy
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TEMPERATURE:

Cool	Cold	Warm	Hot
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NUMBER OF TOURISTS: _____

NATIONALITY (if possible, get this information during the conversation or later from the guide):

AGE ESTIMATED (Tick & specify the number, e.g. 35to50 X 3):

Less than 35 X	35to50 X	50to65 X	65or more X
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COMPOSITION OF GROUP (Tick & specify the number, e.g. Couple X 3):

Single X	Couple X	Family X (Specify the nr of children per family):	Hauser Group
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GENERAL INTEREST SHOWN (Cross or circle): ☺ ☹ ☺ / ☹

ADDITIONAL NOTES (e.g. a person shows a particular interest in one or more issues mentioned or wants to get more information about NaDEET or would like them or one member of their family to volunteer ...):

Legend

Date: to cross check the sales data

Who has given the tour and in which language: to spot “the best-sellers” if any.

Language: English or the mother tongue of the tourists.

Weather condition and temperature: even if these factors seem to be irrelevant, they play an important role in an extreme environment like the desert. If it is very hot the tourists will be less willing to prolong their walk for another 30-45 minutes. The same is true if it is very cold or if it is pouring.

Nationality: to observe if people from one country show more interest than others (useful information to establish the target for a possible development of a day-long programme at NaDEET Centre for tourists)

Age: to observe if older, younger or middle-aged people donate more than others and why (useful information to establish the target for a possible development of a day-long programme at NaDEET Centre for tourists)

Composition of the group: to observe if the composition of the group influences the sales or not e.g. do families with children buy more than couples to satisfy their children’s requests? (Useful information to establish the target for a possible development of a day-long programme at NaDEET Centre for tourists)

General interest shown: easy and quick estimation to rank the general interest of the group.

Additional notes: comments on the tours, unusual questions, interest in volunteering for NaDEET, suggestions on how to improve our facilities, programmes, services.

Results

The data collection started on the 13th April 2012 and ended on the 31st October 2012.

In total 329¹ tourists visited the Centre and 63 tours were given by ten members of NaDEET staff as follows:

NaDEET Staff member	Number of tours given	Language
Elizabeth	8	English
Josefina	1	English
Jule	3	German, English
Karley	1	English
Manuela	2	German, English
Naike	10	French, English
Nick	5	German, English
Vicky	12	English
Viktoria	1	English
Vilho	20	English
TOT	63	57 x English 5 x German 1 x French

Of these 63 tours:

- 3 tours were given to NRNR FHO guests: for the tours to NRNR FHO guests normally a suggested donation of N\$100 is requested; for the purpose of the study it was decided to take this option out to see if the tours requests from NRNR FHO

¹ For two tours this information is not available

tourists would increase which has not been the case. Considering that tourists who come to the Hideout are looking for an unwinding holiday far from everything in the pursuit of isolation and relax this result is not surprising.

- 4 tours were given to Wolwedans guests: sometimes they called NaDEET’s office from Wolwedans to arrange a tour (weekends included) some other times they showed up at the Centre without giving notice.
- 56 tours were given to TT guests, of which 6 were Hauser groups.

In the lapse of time 13th April - 31st October 2012, 73 TT trails took place of which:

- 14 were not included in the survey (mostly in May, during the Centre renovation)
- 1 tour was not given because of NaDEET’s staff unavailability (28th July, slaughtering)
- 2 tours were not given because of TT guests lack of time

Weather Conditions:

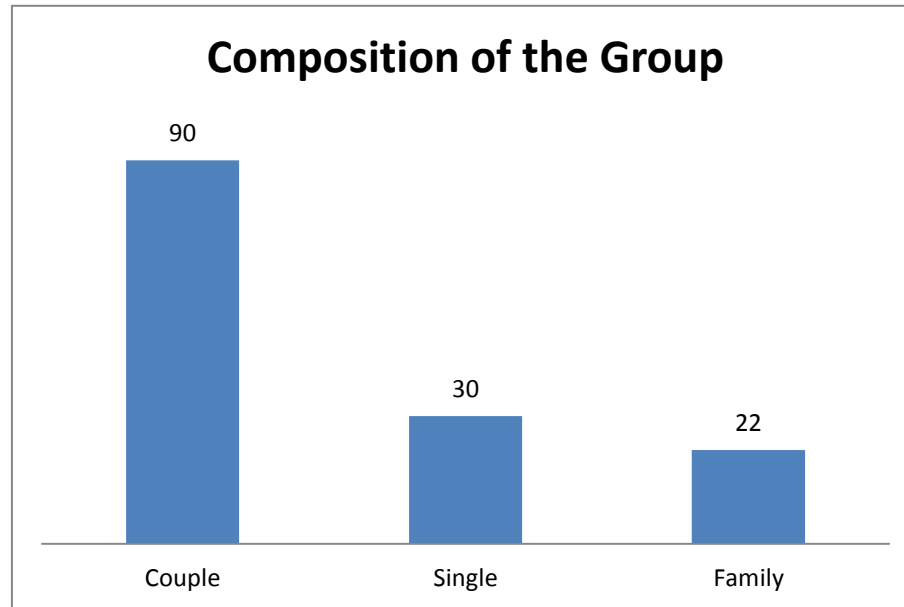
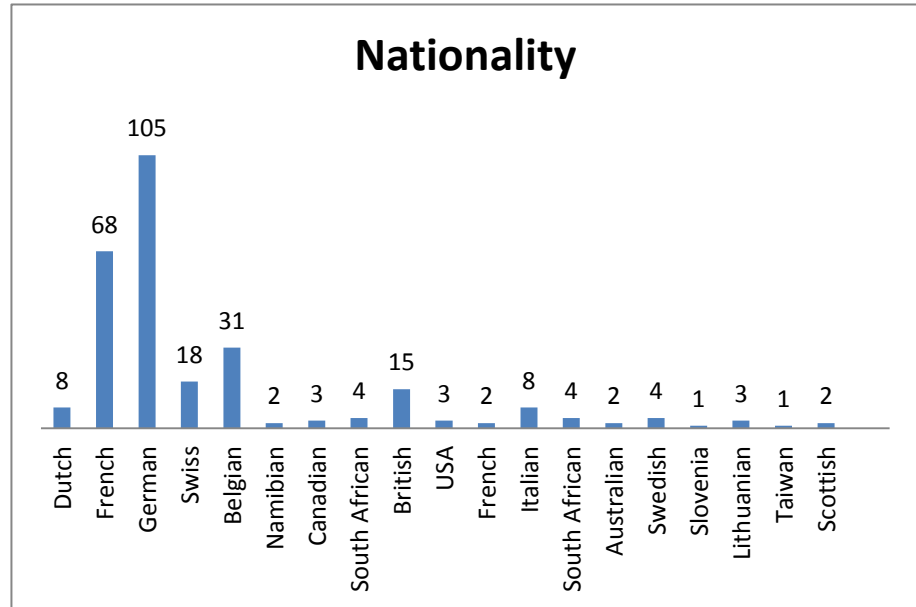
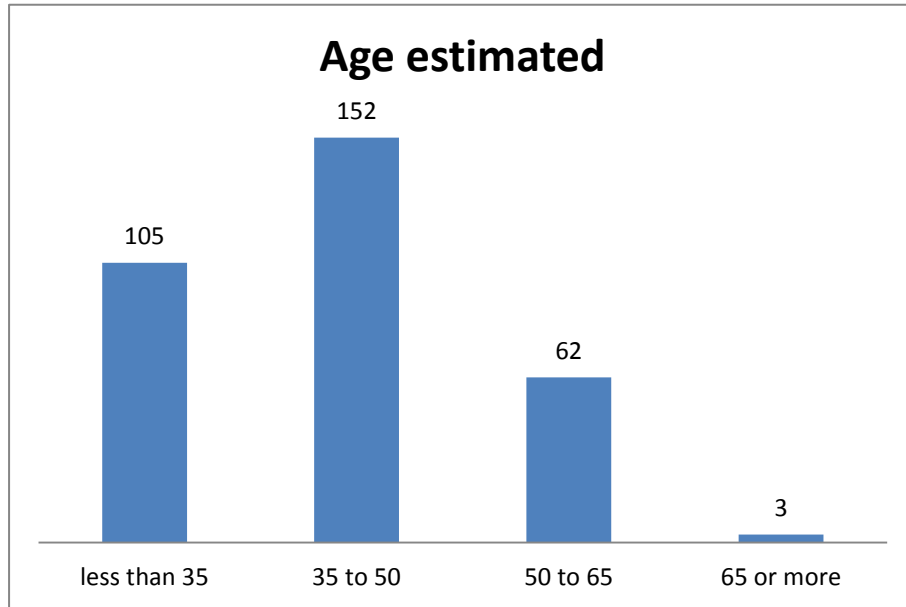
Sunny	Partially cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy	Total
55	7	1	/	63

Temperature:

Cold	Cool	Warm	Hot	Total
10	22	25	6	63

The majority of the tours were given at the best weather conditions and temperatures (sunny, cool or warm). Moreover, since it has never been rainy and since the time the guests (mainly from TT) normally arrive at the Centre (between 9.00am and 10.00pm) is never too cold in winter nor too hot in summer, the outcome of the tours was not affected by these two factors.

Age estimated, nationality and composition of the group



These three factors did not significantly influence the outcome of the tours. Moreover, the data collected are not 100% accurate because it was not always possible for the people who gave tours to get this information. Therefore, the total amount of each single category will not equal 329. Nevertheless, some considerations can be done:

- The majority of the tourists visiting the Centre are in their forties; in general, this is the age of best economic stability for many people in Western countries: they have been working (and saving money) for at least 20 years and their children are grown up and most likely financially independent (or almost). Surprisingly, tourists under the age of 35 are also numerous. Considering that a trip to Namibia is pretty much expensive (especially a stay at one of the NRNR tourist concessionaires) they must be relatively wealthy. For the same reason, tourists in their late fifties must be people who retired from upper-income jobs. It is also true, though, that a wealthy status is not synonym of higher donations or more purchases: people's good-will is not directly connected to the capacity of their wallet.
- The majority of tourists who visited the Centre come from Europe: Germans are definitely the more numerous, followed by French (almost twice as less); other Europeans nationalities more or less equal each other. Namibians and South Africans are a tiny part of the total. North America and Oceania are also represented but minimally. It needs to be pointed out that French people often cannot understand English properly which makes the tour less effective.
- The majority of the visitors were couples while the number of singles and families almost equal each other. No relevant trend was detected apart from the fact that the bigger and the more mixed the group of tourists is, higher is the chance that more people buy or donate "stimulated" by their fellows' behaviour.

General interest shown

:)	:) / :(:(Total
223	104	2	329

The majority of the visitors showed interest in the tour. Almost one third of tourists were interested but not enthusiastic. Only 2 people out of 329 did not show interest at all.

Additional notes

In this section NaDEET's staff members specified information which they considered as relevant:

- Comments such as “the group was very interested and impressed” occur very often.
- The most attracting parts of the tour for the visitors seem to be the explanation of solar cooking and recycled firebricks. Comments on the fact that in Europe solar cooking cannot happen because of lack of sunny days are frequent. NaDEET staff should be ready to explain why this is not true.
- In three cases visitors asked questions about how to volunteer for NaDEET.
- It happened once that a group of visitors knew about NaDEET already because they had visited our website previously.
- Visitors were sometimes interested in participating in NaDEET's programmes.

FAQ

Questions about solar cooking: how much is it a solar cooker? And a oven? Is solar cooking spread in Namibia?

How many KW/h do panels produce?

How long does the stored energy last in the batteries?

How long do batteries last?

Do you make follow-up visits in the schools / communities?

Was there a group at NaDEET Centre when the tour occurred?

School	Educator / community	Workshop	Total	None: Monday mornings, Friday mornings, Centre closed or weekends	Total
19	9	4	32	31	63

As shown in the table above, 32 tours were given when a group was at the Centre and 31 when there was no group. Considering that the period where the Centre was closed because of the renovation is not included in the survey this data are quite surprising because NaDEET Centre was fully booked. It is also true, though, that many tours took place on Monday and Friday mornings during the Centre preparation or clean-up when the group was not arrived yet or had left already. This piece of information is very important because the tours are much more effective when there is action at the Centre as direct demonstration of what people are told during the tour.

Financial Results

NaDEET Staff member	Number of tours given	It's time to ID	It's time to solar cook	It's time to change	Booklets pack	Post card	T-shirt	Polo shirt	Beanie / Hat	Sticker	TT beetle	Profit (price - cost)	Donations
Elizabeth	8	7	/	/	/	3	5	4	/	1	/	N\$1,406.7	N\$340
Josefina	1	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	2	N\$466	N\$0
Jule	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N\$0	N\$0
Karley	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N\$0	N\$0
Manuela	2	2	/	/	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	N\$ 295	N\$100
Naike	10	6	/	/	2	2	2	2	/	/	/	N\$1,196.6	N\$500
Nick	5	11	/	/	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	N\$1,195	N\$600
Vicky	12	5	1	1	1	5	1	/	/	/	/	N\$1,479	N\$2,305
Viktorija	1	1	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N\$100	N\$0
Vilho	20	10	1	/	/	8	13	4	15	/	/	N\$2,875.2	N\$570
Total	63	45	2	1	5	18	21	10	15	1	2	N\$9,013.5	N\$4,415

Staff members are not paid for giving tours no matter when the tours take place if during the week or at weekends but in order to have an accurate calculation of the actual profit made by NaDEET out of tours of the Centre the costs of the staff need to be included.

However, to establish the actual cost some factors need to be taken into consideration:

- Tours given during working hours by NaDEET Centre staff are theoretically costing no money to NaDEET because the staff is at the Centre busy with the group anyways, although the smooth flow of the programme may be affected somehow.
- Tours given at weekends by volunteers would cost NaDEET no money, while those given by employees are currently costing no money to NaDEET, but theoretically they could be claimed as working time.
- When there is no group at the Centre, a member of the staff needs to either walk or drive to the Centre and wait for the visitors to come. This problem is normally solved by planning some maintenance or inventory jobs at the Centre for the day where tourists are coming. Nevertheless this is not always possible. In this case, no matter who gives the tour (volunteers or employees) indirectly cost NaDEET money because they have to interrupt what they are doing and allocate some of their time for the tour which may produce money to NaDEET or not (being that the tour is given for free).
- The administration of the tours (curios sales, donations, printing of sales sheets and envelopes) requires time. It was calculated that these activities take an average of 3 to 4 hours depending on the month.

To simplify and try to include all these factors in the costs it was decided to reputedly charge each tour with N\$50 no matter if they were given during the week or at weekends, by volunteers or by employees, when part of NaDEET staff was busy at the Centre with a group or if the Centre was closed. The money charged extra (e.g. a tour given by a volunteer when working at the Centre has no cost for NaDEET) will cover the administration costs which were intentionally left aside.

Therefore:

$(\text{Profit from Curios Sales} + \text{Donations})\text{N\$} - (\text{Total nr of Tours Given} \times \text{N\$50}) = \text{Actual Profit made out of Tours}$

$(9,013.50 + 4,415.00)\text{N\$} - (63 \times \text{N\$50}) = (13,428.50 - 3,150)\text{N\$} = \text{N\$10,278.50}$

Conclusions

The objectives of the study have been all met:

- The Centre Tour has been improved and a new guide for new staff members was written to uniform the way tours are given. Copies of the Newsletter and of the *Bush Telegraph* are given out.

The person who gives the tour always asks for the visitors' email addresses. Since the beginning of the study 84 new contacts have been added to NaDEET's mailing list and now receive news from NaDEET three times a year.

29 of them have been entered as donors due to a donation made whilst at NaDEET and may choose to donate again if reminded by the newsletter.

The sales and donations have increased compared to the same period of the study (April - October) in 2011 but not drastically.

- The actual profit made by NaDEET out of Centre tours was calculated as illustrated earlier in this paper.
- Establishing if giving tours is worthwhile or not is a more complicated question. Many factors contribute to the answer:
 - Financial aspects
 - The "unknown factor"
 - The "people factor"
 - The cultural and psychological factor
 - The opinion of the staff
 - Financial aspects

All costs calculated and deducted from the profit and donations, NaDEET earned N\$10,278.50 in 6 months, which means an average of N\$1,713.08 per month. Considering that the cost of a child participant for one day at NaDEET Centre is N\$165 per day, with such an amount NaDEET could cover the cost of two children for one week plus another child for two days at

NaDEET Centre, just to give an example. Moreover, it sometimes happened that the guests took a donation envelope and put a donation in the donation box at Base or they purchased curios at the office. Since it was not always possible to track them when combining the data from the surveys and those from the curios and donations sheets not all of them are included which mean that the actual income may be slightly higher. It is true that the energy and the efforts put by the staff into the tours could be used for other more effective fundraising projects. Nevertheless, other fundraising activities require skills that not everybody has: doing research, critical reading and writing, good concentration ability, computer knowledge and – not to be underestimated - the ability of sitting in front of the computer for hours, etc. Not secondary is the fact that the majority of the tours have been given when a group was at the Centre or about to come or had just left which means that the staff would have been busy working at the Centre anyways or at weekends when NaDEET staff normally does not work. Therefore, the time spent giving tours that could be used for projects of different nature would not be as much.

- The unknown factor

Apart from the financial aspect, it must also be considered the role played by the tours in creating awareness whose outcome is unknown and it may turn into financial outcome later on. Once, for example, a tourist from Germany showed great interest in NaDEET and said she would definitely contact Freundschaft mit NaDEET to make a donation and that she would talk to her learners about our project (she teaches yoga) and that her two children would give a presentation about NaDEET at school. If this happened it is unfortunately not possible to establish, but this shows how creating awareness with visitors from overseas is important to spread the word about NaDEET at an international level.

- The cultural and psychological factor

It seems that tours given by Namibians are more effective than tours given by foreign volunteers: Namibians sell more and receive more donations. This may be due to the psychological factor: people from overseas do not expect (or maybe do not want...) to find foreign people if not other tourists in Namibia. Moreover, although they know that the money received by the person who gives the tour goes to the organisation and not directly to the person who is only acting as a middle person, they

may be more willing to support Namibians than a volunteer from their continent. These are all assumptions although they definitely have a kernel of truth as far as it was observed during the tours.

- The people

The success of tours depends heavily on:

- 1 The tourist guide
- 2 The group of tourists
- 3 NaDEET staff
- 1 The tourist guide

Did the guide introduce NaDEET to the group already?

Does the guide stress the usefulness of "It's time to identify" booklet?

Does the guide remain with the group whilst NaDEET staff is giving the tour?

Does the guide interact, ask questions and add information he/she think the group may be interested in knowing?

Does the guide rush the tour or let NaDEET staff talking to the guests and answering their questions as needed?

- 2 The group of tourists

Does the group understand English well?

Are the visitors tired, hot, cold, thirsty, hungry?

Are the visitors already mentally projected towards their next destination?

Are the visitors in a hurry?

- 3 NaDEET staff

Is the staff member comfortable talking in front of people he/she does not know?

Is the staff member a good speaker (easy and interesting to listen to)?

How much about NaDEET does the staff member know (and therefore how well can he/she deal with questions)?

Point 1 and 2, the guide and the group, are factors on which NaDEET cannot have influence on. As for point 3, NaDEET could have the most talented and effective speakers to give the tours.

- The opinion of the staff

The staff members were interviewed to find out their opinions about the tours. The following questions were asked:

1 *Your general impression about tours.*

2 *Why do you think giving tours is important?*

3 *Would you change the way of giving tours somehow?*

4 *Do you mind giving tours at weekends?*

5 *Would you give all the weekends tours if none of your colleagues was willing to do that?*

6 *Do you mind giving tours at weekends without being paid or compensated?*

7 *Would you change your weekend plans for a tour?*

8 *Do you agree with the fact that only staff members living at Staff Valley should give tours at weekends?*

9 *Do you think tours that take place when a group is at the Centre affect the programme? If yes, how?*

10 *Do you think NaDEET should cancel the tours when no groups are at the Centre (and therefore all the staff members are working at the Base)?*

11 *Do you think that a tour given by the tourist guide would be as effective as one given by a NaDEET staff member?*

12 *Do you think NaDEET should develop a tourist day?*

Overall, the impressions about the tours are good. All the interviewees answered that for them the tour's first aim is creating awareness. Three of them even said that they do not consider the financial aspect at all: for them the tours is just a very good opportunity to spread the word about NaDEET and its uniqueness. The staff is happy with the new centre tour guidelines and would not change it. The majority of the staff does not mind giving tours at weekend without being paid or compensated with additional free time provided that the staff takes turns. None of them was eager to change their weekend

plans for a tour unless NaDEET was asking them to. None of them would take over all the weekend tours. All agreed on the fact that it makes more sense for staff living at Staff Valley to take all the weekend tours. One pointed out that this is not fair, but definitely more time efficient. None of the people working at the Centre think that tours affect the programme. Some of them said that it should be common habit to tell the guests not to talk whilst in the classroom. The two educators said they are not disturbed by people in the classroom while teaching. Karley said she always tries to be aware of tourists coming and she tells the learners about it before starting her lesson. Vilho said he normally greets and welcomes the guests and tells them what he is busy on together with the learners. Satisfied everybody's curiosity (the tourists' and the kid's) he carries on his lesson. Tuesday mornings seem to be a bit of a problem due to the "Power of the Sun' activity, which can be solved, according to the staff, by cancelling the tours on Tuesdays or having people from Base to come for the tour or simply – and personally I agree with this last suggestion- inviting the guide to show around and to pass by the office for further information. None of the interviewees think that tours given by the tourist guide would be as effective as those given by NaDEET staff. Mixed opinions came out from the question on if the tours should be cancelled when there is no group at the Centre. As for the development of a "tourist day" some of them found it an interesting idea, but did not know how it could be implemented, one of them totally supported it and others were pretty much sceptical.

In conclusion, this study shows that giving tours is a worthwhile activity on a financial point of view although as demonstrated the outcome of tours depends heavily on the group, their guide and the NaDEET staff member giving the tour. Creating awareness is another good reason why NaDEET should keep on giving tours. Moreover, according to the interviews of current staff, they do not mind giving tours at weekends without being compensated and some of them even enjoy it. Therefore, at this stage there is no reason why NaDEET should stop the tour activity. Nevertheless, if in the future NaDEET staff claimed the time spent giving tours as working time these conclusions may be reconsidered.

Recommendations

- In the future NaDEET should only have Namibians to give tours instead of volunteers from overseas: NaDEET is a Namibian organisation, which works with Namibians in order to protect the natural environment of Namibia and in addition it seems that tours given by Namibians are more effective on a financial point view. Therefore, the suggestion of giving tour in the mother tongue is no longer valid: firstly because most of the time the groups are composed of tourists from different countries and secondly because NaDEET not always has available staff members who can speak different languages. Unless specifically requested, Hauser tours should no longer be given in German by GIZ volunteers but in English by Namibians.
- The price of the postcards should still reflect the price of a child participant for one day. Since this price is going to increase from N\$165 to N\$180 it is suggested to sell a pack of four postcards for that price instead of a single one.
- No tourist day should be developed at this stage. NaDEET is currently able to carry on with a small budget many different activities and projects comparable to those of much bigger NGOs. Moreover, at the moment NaDEET has other sources of funding (grants from international and local entities, support organisations from overseas...) and should not invest time, money and energy in something which would require further and more accurate studies (the tourist market in the area, the target, product development...).