

# Bush Telegraph

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WOMEN for a  
SUSTAINABLE  
ENVIRONMENT

# EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR SUSTAINABILITY!





Around the world, women play the role of "caretaker" of their households. This means that they are responsible for providing their families with food, water and shelter. To meet these needs all women depend on natural resources by either directly collecting them or purchasing them. Unfortunately, many of our resources, like firewood and water, are over-utilised and/or polluted. Some women have no choice and suffer harmful consequences from the resources they use. For example, burning of firewood can cause respiratory problems, air pollution and deforestation. This creates challenges for women to provide for their families. Through education and training, women can be empowered to overcome these challenges. For example, with an income or access to alternative technologies like a solar stove, they can better care for their households, their health and the environment. This leads to a more sustainable lifestyle.


**What is to empower?**  
To give someone or something the ability and tools to act


**What is sustainability?**  
The ability to keep something ongoing

Compare the two women below. Which one do you think is empowered? Why?

Woman #1		Woman #2	
Number of Children	2 	Number of Children	7 
Do all your school-aged children go to school?	Yes	Do all your school-aged children go to school?	No
Do you have an education or training?	Yes	Do you have an education or training?	No
Do you earn an income?	Yes, I sell crafts made from recycled materials	Do you earn an income?	No
Cooking Energy Source	Solar	Cooking Energy Source	Firewood

**Breaking Barriers**

 Women hold a unique position in the family because they have the ability to change practices. However, due to cultural and traditional attitudes, women are often not treated equally or respected. Women have the right to stand up for themselves and break these barriers. The women featured on the bottom of each page of the **Bush Telegraph** have broken these barriers and are role models for women and the environment worldwide. See what they have to say about sustainability.



"Countries are now crying when they've allowed their species to be completely wiped out because they are realising what they've lost."

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah  
Minister of Environment and Tourism, Namibia

## NAMIBIAN WOMEN TAKING ACTION

In Namibia, several organisations are helping the environment and women in creative ways. These include re-using and recycling materials; using alternative forms of energy and creating forms of income that are environmentally sustainable. Do you know an empowered woman taking action for herself and the environment?

Read on about empowered women living a more sustainable lifestyle!



Case Study  
#1

Penduka is a non-profit organisation in Katutura that trains women to make high-quality crafts, primarily embroidered textiles. These are sold in Windhoek and Europe to create an income for the women. Penduka focuses on helping women with disabilities and employs many women who are hearing impaired. Through Penduka, these women now have an income to better care for their families, the environment and themselves.



### Empowering Disabled Women by Recycling

Recycled glass beads are an environmentally friendly product sold at Penduka and made by hearing impaired women. Training these women, who would otherwise have difficulty finding a job, contributes to their empowerment and the health of the environment. The beads are made from glass collected around Windhoek. After it is sorted, the glass is crushed into tiny pieces. These are put into a mould and placed back into a fire to make beads.



**Did you know?** In Oshiwambo and Otjiherero the word Penduka means "Wake Up!" What are three things you can do when you wake up to save resources and live sustainably? Complete the sentences below:

1. When I brush my teeth I can turn off the \_\_\_\_\_ to save water.
2. When I leave my room I can turn off the \_\_\_\_\_ to not waste electricity.
3. I can reuse an old plastic bag by turning it into a \_\_\_\_\_.

Contact Penduka for more information @ 061-257210 or [penduka@namibnet.com](mailto:penduka@namibnet.com)



"The greatest danger to our future is apathy."  
Jane Goodall,  
British primatologist & conservationist, Tanzania

# SOLAR STOVE PROJECT TRUST

**Case Study #2**

The Solar Stove Project Trust in Ongwediva empowers women by introducing and selling solar stoves in Namibia. The organisation trains women to construct and sell solar stoves. With these stoves, the project women can bake up to 70 loaves of bread a day to earn money. The Solar Stove Project Trust sells two sizes of solar ovens to the public. The smaller one is N\$650 and the larger one is N\$1050.



Solar cooking prevents deforestation, which is the cutting down of trees quicker than they are replaced.

**Traditional Energy Sources vs. Solar Energy**  
 Most women spend lots of time collecting firewood and cooking by an open fire to provide food for their families. This causes deforestation and the smoke from the open fire can lead to health problems for the women. Women also may use gas and electricity to cook with which are expensive and pollute. Households that depend on fossil fuels for cooking have less money to spend on other things.

**The Empowered Decision**  
 Solar stoves save money, time and natural resources because the sun cooks for you! A solar stove is cost-effective because it will last at least 10 years.

**Compare the Environmental Impact of Different Cooking Energy Sources**  
 What energy source do you use for cooking at home? Most methods of cooking have negative impacts on the environment. Use the table below to calculate the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution your fuel source creates compared with solar energy.

Energy Source	Pollution clouds per hour of cooking	How much pollution does your cooking produce?	How much pollution does solar cooking produce?
Electricity	☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁	Your energy source: .....	Solar
Gas	☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁		Number of hours you cook per day?.....
Firewood	☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁☁	Pollution clouds created per day?.....	6 x 0 = zero pollution clouds
Firewood in Fuel-Efficient Stove	☁☁☁		
Solar	Zero		
☁☁☁ = 250 grams of CO <sub>2</sub> / hr			

Contact the Solar Stove Project Trust for more information @ 065-234 100



"In nature's economy the currency is not money, it is life."  
 Vandana Shiva,  
 environmental activist, author and philosopher, India

## WOMEN'S ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Case Study  
#3

Women's Action for Development (WAD) is an organisation working all over Namibia. WAD empowers women to start their own enterprise by giving them skills and training. WAD encourages women to work together to create savings clubs. By combining their savings, women can buy equipment that they couldn't afford on their own. Several of WAD's projects also directly address environmental and health problems.



### Linen Shopping Bags

WAD sells reusable cloth shopping bags made by women at Pick N' Pay stores countrywide. These products are important because they reduce waste by reducing the amount of rubbish from plastic bags. However, one challenge for the project is the competition from South African companies that also sell reusable bags at grocery stores in Namibia.



### Mosquito Net Project Success

In the Omusati region, WAD trained semi-literate women to sew and sell mosquito nets. The project was so successful that after only 5 years, the women had saved over N\$80,000 and were able to lend money to other women to start their own businesses. The mosquito nets also help improve living standards among the population by reducing malaria.

### Make Your Own Recycled Fire Bricks

WAD shows women how to make recycled fire bricks that can be made at home to use in place of firewood. Here is how to make them with some waste paper, an empty container and some water. First, rip the paper into small pieces and then soak them in water in the container. Next, mash up the paper so it looks like porridge. Third, make a ball and squeeze out the extra water. Leave in the sun to dry out. Make sure to reuse the extra water!



Contact WAD @ 061-227630 or [wad@mweb.com.na](mailto:wad@mweb.com.na)



"It is the people who must save the environment. It is the people who must make their leaders change. And we cannot be intimidated. So we must stand up for what we believe in."

Wangari Maathai,  
environmentalist and political activist, Kenya



# DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT -WOMEN-

"Women are in the frontline in the quest for sustainable development but have, for too long, been forced into a back-seat role with respect to men. They are often the custodians of indigenous knowledge and promoters of biodiversity and environmentally friendly management."  
- Klaus Toepfer, former director of the United Nations Environment Programme

**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):**  
**Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**  
What is gender equality?  
Gender equality is treating women and men equally. In many societies, women are not allowed to have the same opportunities as men. They are not allowed to attend school, earn an income and hold leadership roles in their communities. The empowerment of women is essential for environmental sustainability. Everyone needs to be involved and educated about the environment in order to conserve it.




**Is Namibia achieving the Millennium Development goals of gender equality and universal access to primary education?**  
Namibia is one of the few countries where there is little to no gap between boys' and girls' attendance in primary, secondary and tertiary schools. However, according to the UNDP 2008 report, 30% of all children in Namibia still lack access to education.



The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) focuses on achieving environmental education for all children. This will ensure that students learn about conserving natural resources and how to develop sustainable lifestyles and live in an environmentally friendly way.

**Did you know?**  
International Women's Day is 8 March.  
Join in and celebrate women!

"Most environmental damage in the world has been caused in the last 50 years, and we should recognize with shame and humility that it is...those who are still living, which have caused this serious damage to our Earth."  
Julia Carabias Lillo,  
former Secretary of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries, Mexico



## PERSONALITIES IN CONSERVATION

**Name:** Veronica de Klerk

**Job:** Executive Director and founder of Women's Action for Development (WAD).

**Number of years at WAD:** 15 years

**What does WAD do?**



WAD empowers the poorest of the poor, including men, in rural communities in all 13 regions of Namibia. WAD is fearless as it addresses socioeconomic and socio-political problems. The organization focuses on allowing women the opportunity to earn an income so that they can feed their families.



**How many people are employed?**

WAD only employs the head office staff and trainers. WAD doesn't employ women directly, but works to create income-generating projects.

**What are some of your most successful projects?**

Our linen shopping bags and recycled fire bricks are two successful environmental projects. I am also very proud of the mosquito net project in the Omusati region. We trained semi-literate women to make mosquito nets and after 5 years they had saved N\$80,000 and were able to lend money to other women to start their own businesses.

**How did you become interested in this work?**

Both of my parents were missionaries so I grew up wanting to help others. After attending the 4th conference for women in Beijing, I was inspired to empower women to make their lives better.

**How can women get involved in WAD?**

We have offices in the capitals of all 13 regions. Women can call the head office and we would be happy to direct them. We had the first Great Walk Against Corruption and will celebrate National Arbor Day on 9 October, so listen to the radio for details and join in these events.

**What is the biggest challenge of your work?**

Cultural practices that favour men. A specific challenge we focus on is violence against women and we have recently completed a two year long study on violence. We will report the findings in each region so women are educated on the subject and know their rights.

**Veronica's Message to Namibia's Youth:**

Be innovative. Do not sit at home and wait, there's so much you can do in the country. Everyone has special talents and it's up to you to use those talents.

# For the BEGINNER READER: WOMEN ROLE MODELS

**Who are the important women in your life?**

Your mom, sister, aunt, grandmother, or friend? Why? Perhaps one of these women is your role model. Role models are people who we look up to. You can also be a role model in the way you treat the environment. Many role models create new ideas and things that change the way we live. When others see how you have recycled or re-used an empty container, they will want to follow.



**Be The Change**

We all have a special role in protecting the environment. Everyone can take action to save resources and be a role model for others. If you were President of Namibia, what would you do to save the environment and help women? Fill in the sentences below.

1. I would give every woman a solar cooker.
2. I would \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I would \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I would \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I would \_\_\_\_\_.

**EMPOWERMENT WORDSEARCH**

Can you find the following words in the wordsearch?

- Empower
- Environment
- Women
- Penduka
- Recycle
- Solar Stove
- Sustainable
- WAD

Q	E	Q	D	O	C	H	P	S	N	S	
E	T	D	M	N	A	T	E	I	R	B	C
L	M	Y	R	U	K	W	E	D	F	D	B
B	A	P	L	X	U	C	P	E	E	E	F
A	S	O	O	A	D	I	F	T	W	L	B
N	L	X	R	W	N	F	E	Z	O	C	H
I	E	R	T	H	E	Y	J	H	M	Y	N
A	E	R	T	Q	P	R	S	E	E	C	I
T	N	E	M	N	O	R	I	V	N	E	N
S	O	L	A	R	S	T	O	V	E	R	X
U	I	I	T	E	R	S	L	R	N	M	C
S	E	C	X	T	S	P	G	P	T	T	E

Answers can be ↑ ↓ ← → ↖ or ↘



"In fact it does not need a big revolution to redeem our planet and ourselves. All it takes are small steps to cool the climate and our mutually induced mass destruction."  
 Mei Ng,  
 former Director of Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong




# For the ADVANCED READER: MICROCREDIT

## Challenges Faced By Women

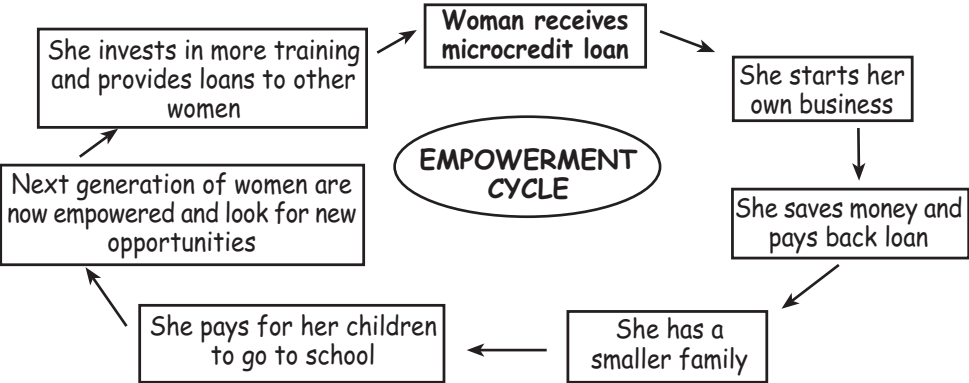
Women also face environmental challenges because of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is when women are treated worse solely because they are female. For example, by spending more time looking for and cooking with firewood, women are using up valuable time that could be spent earning an income or attending school. When women do not earn an income of their own, they are not given the same power and opportunities as men.




### Lending for Empowerment



Microcredit, giving small, low-interest loans to poor individuals, can have many benefits. If a woman is given a small loan, she is able to start her own business and earn money. Women can then save up money to expand their business. As a result, women are likely to have less children as they realise they can provide more opportunities to each child. By having a smaller family, more children can go to school and be properly fed. Empowered women who start their own business start a cycle which leads to a healthier family and environment.





"Like the resource it seeks to protect, wildlife conservation must be dynamic, changing as conditions change, seeking always to become more effective."  
*Rachel Carson,*  
 marine biologist and nature writer, United States

## ACTIVITY PAGE

### Get Creative and Empower Yourself

You too can make your own crafts. If you don't have all the materials listed below, use what you do have. After all, every recycled craft is unique-be creative!

#### Paper Beads

What you will need:

- ~ Waste Paper (empty TopScore or flour bags, newspaper)
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Glue
- ~ String
- ~ Markers, Crayons or Paint
- ~ Pencil or stick



1) Cut the paper into thin, triangular strips about 20 cm long.

2) Decorate one side with markers, crayons, coloured pencils or paint.



3) Face the decorated side down. Start with the widest end of the triangle and roll the paper tightly around the pencil once.

4) Now put glue on the side facing up and roll the rest of the paper. The glue will make the paper stick together.

5) When dry, take the rolled up paper off the pencil. You now have made a bead.

6) Make many of the paper beads and then put them on a string to make a bracelet or necklace!



#### Tin Star/ Flower Wind Chime

What you will need:

- ~ empty cool drink tin
- ~ scissors
- ~ string
- ~ stick
- ~ nail



Be careful when cutting as the tin can be sharp.

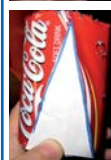
1) First use the nail to make a hole on the side of the tin near the top. Make it big enough so you can use the scissors.



2) Use the scissors to cut off the top of the tin.  
3) Make a pattern, for example a triangle, that fits the size of the tin.



4) Trace the pattern several times on the sides of the tin.  
5) Cut out the pattern on the lines.



6) Carefully fold down each side. These are the petals of your flower or star.

7) Use a nail to make a hole at the end of one of the petals.



8) Tie a string through the hole and hang up the flower from the stick. Find a place outside to hang it!





# Chinga's & Nzovu's Corner



Dear friends,  
If you have questions about the environment, please send them to us so we can answer them for you! Write to: Chinga & Nzovu, NaDEET, PO Box 31017, Pioniers Park, Windhoek

Dear Chinga and Nzovu,  
Why does a golden mole not have eyes?  
Lydia in Aranos

Dear Lydia,  
Thanks for your question on one of the smallest mammals living in the Namib Desert. Most animals use their eyes to find food, water and shelter.



Over time, the golden moles evolved to not have eyes since they spend most of their time

under the sand. Instead to find food, golden moles have developed an incredible sense of hearing, even without external ears. Did you know that golden moles hear through specialised bones in their skull that sense vibrations in the sand? They have other adaptations as well including three claws on both of their front feet so that they can "swim" under the sand and an ability to save water by lowering its body temperature.

Chinga and Nzovu

Dear Chinga and Nzovu,  
What does a millipede eat? Is there something which eats millipedes? Why do chameleons not eat millipedes?

Desney, Elrico and Viola in Aranos

Dear Desney, Elrico & Viola,  
We are happy to answer your

questions about millipedes. Most millipedes are herbivores meaning they eat



only leaves and plant matter. However, some are omnivores and eat animals. Millipedes also feed on detritus which is made up of decaying plants. Millipedes are often called nature's "recyclers". Millipedes are not always eaten by predators because they emit poisonous liquid in self-defense. This makes them taste bad and can make even hungry predators not eat them, including chameleons. Millipedes are eaten by scorpions, birds and lizards.

Chinga and Nzovu

## UPDATES FROM LAST ISSUE

Answer from last issue:  
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**The Bush Telegraph is a NaDEET publication since 2003  
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**NaDEET Centre: A Sustainable Living Experience**

**Tel:** 063-693012 **Fax:** 063-693013 **Email:** admin@nadeet.org **Web:** www.nadeet.org

NaDEET Centre offers week-long programmes for school, youth, educator and adult groups in the Namib Desert. The programme aims to engage participants in sustainable living through first-hand learning and living experiences.

**Join the BUSH TELEGRAPH Reader Club**



The Bush Telegraph is a mini-magazine for Namibian youth. It aims to increase knowledge of and improve attitudes towards our environment through reading. It is distributed twice a year for free. Just fill in this form and send it to this address: **Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET), P.O. Box 31017, Pioniers Park, Windhoek**



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School.....

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yes, please send me ..... additional copies.