

Vol. 7, No. 1

# THE GOLDEN MOLE

NaDEET's Endemic Newsletter



July 2009

## Reaching out to Local, Less Privileged Schools



Stampriet learners investigating energy efficient light bulbs

Through funding from the Netherlands Consulate, NaDEET invited three primary schools from our local Hardap Region to participate in the NaDEET Centre programme at the beginning of this year. The schools that participated were Sonop Primary School from Mariental, Stampriet Primary School from Stampriet and St. Patrick's Primary School, a small farm school outside of Kalkrand. A total of 102 schoolchildren and teachers benefited from the NaDEET Centre experience as they were engaged in our sustainable living programme.

Mr. Mall from Sonop PS commented,

*It is an excellent programme which makes people more aware of the effects their everyday activities have on their environment. It is very inspirational towards sustainable living. Practical learning activities motivate all age groups. [NaDEET is] a very effective learning and living environment which promotes sustainable living.*

This funding has given NaDEET the opportunity to reach out to less fortunate children in our local region. One of NaDEET's original objectives is to provide an environmental education centre to schools in the southern part of Namibia as all other centres in the country are located in the central and northern regions.

We have recently conducted an evaluation and have determined that 31% of schools in the Hardap Region have been to NaDEET. Our aim is to have 100% of schools in our region visit NaDEET within the next 3-4 years. The main barriers to achieving this are improving awareness and understanding of what the NaDEET Centre programme offers and assisting in providing access to transport and finances.



Sonop schoolchildren playing 'Sustainable NaDEET Picture Game'

This project has started the process of addressing these barriers by providing the opportunity for three schools to participate at NaDEET Centre. We have approached several donors to fund this project in 2010 to enable us to reach out to more schools. NaDEET will conduct an Awareness Drive at the beginning of the new school year in January 2010 by visiting local schools to complement these efforts. We hope that participating teachers from this year's participating schools will now share with their communities the value and benefit of NaDEET Centre for their learners and will find ways and means to take part again in the coming years.

Ms. Gamaseb from St. Patrick's PS realised this and wrote in her evaluation,

*We had a good impression about the place, the structure, and the open air as well as the environment. We really enjoyed staying here and hope to come back in the near future. The programme is so informative, excellent and very interesting. We as teachers as well as learners learned a lot here at NaDEET. The programme is implemented according to the school syllabus. I think it will help a lot, especially for the learners to look after their environment.*

The Golden Mole is produced using solar and wind powered electricity

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NaDEET is a registered non-profit trust in Namibia.

Trust Certificate #: T168/ 2003

Trustees: C. Berker, E. Dürr,  
U. Nakamhela  
Director: V. Keding



## Official Launch and Distribution

On 2 July NaDEET officially launched the “It’s Time to Change” activity book at the Craft Centre Café in Windhoek. The event took place together with the Namibian Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) launch of the first NEWS-stand and their annual corporate function. With approximately fifty guests it was a well attended and exciting evening for NaDEET and NEWS as we were able to showcase our new products that aim to disseminate environmental awareness to the public.

With funding from two Dutch organizations, Wilde Ganzen and deSTEEN, NaDEET has printed 5000 copies of “It’s Time To Change”. Copies are being given free of charge to NaDEET Centre participants, environmental organizations and education programmes and to all schools throughout the country. The Ministry of Education has given their official endorsement of the activity book:



Viktoria Keding officially launching “It’s Time To Change”

*As the Ministry of Education, we continuously try to provide good and quality education to our learners through the teaching and learning processes, as well as the learning and teaching support materials to our learners and teachers. We have carefully studied the book entitled “It’s Time to Change: Living and Learning for Nature” and recommend it without reservation as a good reference and teaching tool for schools and colleges of education as well as anyone interested in environmental education.*

“It’s Time To Change” is also being sold to the general public at various outlets including the NEWS-stand, local bookstores and lodges in the Sossusvlei area. All funds generated through these sales will be used for future reprints so that NaDEET can continue to provide this valuable resource to schoolchildren. For those who cannot access a print copy, an electronic version of “It’s Time for Change” can be downloaded from our website at: [www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html](http://www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html)



NEWS-stand at the Craft Centre

## It’s Time To Change

More and more of us are waking up to the fact that there is an urgent need to change. NaDEET’s new activity book gives our children (and us) great pointers for changes towards a sustainable way of life.

At eight years of age, the youngest member of the Namibian Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS) already knows that people are destroying the environment and that something needs to be done. And she is adamant and outspoken about it: ‘Do you know how I would do it? I would have a farm with a lot of wildlife on it where I would teach people how to do things right! And I would get them to think about all the things they have done wrong and help them to fix them.’ Several visits to NaDEET and working through the simpler sections of the activity book have played a significant role in this passionate interest and concern. The ‘sustainability index’ at the end of the book really got her thinking: ‘Are there people who score zero? And are there also people who score full marks?’ To find out that one is scoring rather average can be a great motivator to change. The activity book is generally a great motivator– it is easy to use, with plenty of food for thought and simple solutions that we can actually implement; and it is attractively illustrated, drawing the reader in to learn from Sustainable Sara and Addy, the horned adder.



The main topics are relevant to all of us, every day: Energy and water use, recycling and waste management, and the effects that negative actions will have on us and our environment. And the title tells us the most important part: ‘It’s Time to Change-Learning and Living FOR Nature’. The change is up to us. Our children will surely judge us for the environmental mess we are creating for them, especially because we can no longer claim that we didn’t know better. Thank you to Viktoria Keding and NaDEET (and to Michelle Gaugler for the great illustrations)- you are not only teaching us how to live sustainably, you are also fostering a whole new generation of environmental educators– and that may just be the change that’ll make the greatest difference.

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*Helge Denker*

*This article originally appeared in the NEWS-letter, Volume 3, Issue 1, July 2009*

## Developing Research and Inquiry Skills in Secondary School Learners

Empowering young Namibians to become environmentally literate citizens is one of NaDEET's aims. From interactions with secondary school learners at NaDEET Centre over the past years, young adults have shown that they are generally not equipped with the necessary skills to independently take meaningful action for the environment. With funding from long-time supporter Nedbank Go Green Fund, NaDEET embarked on a special project to develop these skills.

NaDEET's environmental educator, Frederick Simasiku, was interviewed about this project.

*What is the "Promotion of Environmental Research and Inquiry Skills of Secondary School Learners" project?*

This project aims to develop critical thinking skills and promote environmental action through research on community-level environmental issues. After spending a week at NaDEET Centre, the participants chose a project to investigate in their respective communities. In August, they will present their findings and determine what type of environmental action can be undertaken by community members. This project supports the "alternative to coursework" component for the senior secondary school curriculum.

*Who are the project participants?*

Secondary school learners from grades 9-12 are involved in this project. The 60 learners were selected by teachers for their interest in the environment, leadership skills and academic commitment. In total, six schools are participating in this project- three from Windhoek and three schools from the Hardap and Karas Regions.

*What are some of the learners' projects?*

Each school has one project except Hage Geingob SS which has chosen to do two. The school project topics include studying the biodiversity in the school area, commonly used modes of transport for schoolchildren and littering at the school and around the community.

*What are the expected outcomes?*

We expect each school to produce a research report which will lead to environmental action. Later this year, NaDEET staff will evaluate the projects and discuss methods of action taking based on the project results.

We hope to foster a better understanding of environmental issues in the children so that they can become advocates for the environment in their communities. We also want them to develop their investigative skills to become aware of the problems in their local areas. It is our hope that the research projects will inspire students to take up environmental careers in the future. We also look forward to having the research projects presented and displayed at the upcoming national science fair.

NaDEET intends to use the lessons-learned from this project to improve our programme for all secondary school learners in the coming year.

*Interview conducted by Alanna Pardee*



Windhoek learners completing their biodiversity study at NaDEET

### NaDEET Base Diversifies its Energy

NaDEET is all about practicing what we teach. For this reason we are exploring various kinds of technologies that will reduce our own environmental impact, especially our carbon footprint. Being our own electricity provider, we rely heavily on the sun for our solar panels to get the necessary juice to run our lights, fridges and office equipment. Although theoretically the Namib has sunshine about 360 days a year, in this past year frequent cloud cover has been a very common occurrence much to the dismay of NaDEET's electricity users.

Through a generous sponsorship, we can now produce environmentally-friendly electricity even if there is no sunshine using our new wind generator. Although this technology is becoming more common throughout the world, it is hardly used in Namibia to produce electricity. This may be because local electricity providers, like isolated lodges, prefer solar electricity as it provides a more constant source of energy and is considered more aesthetical. This new addition to our electricity system has proven very useful already to charge our batteries at night and during the cloudy winter weather.

Thank you Mr. Lang for this generous sponsorship.

*Andreas Keding*



## Solar Cooking with Elizabeth

Elizabeth Lammert has been NaDEET's Sustainable Living Kitchen Manager since the beginning of the year. She comes to NaDEET from the Helmut Bleks Foundation's Institute for Home Science and Agriculture. Elizabeth has quickly embraced solar cooking and has spiced up the NaDEET Centre menu with many new meals. Try out Elizabeth's recipes below.

### NaDEET Solar Cooked Vegetable Cream Soup

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 40-45 minutes

Serves: 8

#### Ingredients:

1/4 cabbage

3 carrots

2 large potatoes

120g onion

2 cups milk

1 thick vegetable soup mix

1 tablespoon all purpose flour

1/2 tablespoon pepper

100g butter

1/2 teaspoon salt

#### Directions:

1) Wash and cut all the vegetables. Use a nice sharp knife to cut the vegetables as follows: Carrots should be cut in rings, potatoes in small square blocks, onions should be finely chopped and the cabbage should be cut in rough stripes.

2) Combine all the vegetables and put in black pot on solar cooker with 1 1/2 cup of water to boil for 20 minutes. Check if the carrots are soft enough and if not, boil for five more minutes.



3) Mix together 1 cup of milk, 1 pack of thick vegetable soup mix, pepper, salt and all purpose flour in a bowl.

4) Add the soup mix to the vegetable mixture. Let it simmer for 5-10 minutes. Add 1 more cup milk as the soup is getting thicker.

**And there you have vegetable cream soup. Serve warm with fat cakes. ENJOY!!!**

### NaDEET Solar Cooked Fat Cakes

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20-25 minutes

Serves: 8



#### Ingredients:

500g white bread flour

10g dry instant yeast

30g sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

300ml cooking oil

lukewarm water

#### Directions:

1) Put all the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix.

2) Slowly add lukewarm water as you stir or gently beat the dough. Continue until you have a lightly thick dough.

3) Let it rest for 15-20 minutes for dough to rise.

4) Heat cooking oil in a black pot on the solar cooker until small bubbles appear. You can test the heat by seeing if a drop of water sizzles in the oil.

5) Make the dough into small balls

6) When the oil is hot, fry the balls until they are golden brown. Test with a fork to see if it comes out clean. Approximately 3-4 minutes depending on size of fat cake and texture of dough.

## NaDEET Custodian of a NamibRand Weather Station

NaDEET has been given custodianship of one of NamibRand's weather stations. The Oregon Scientific weather station is located at the NaDEET base and transmits weather data to a receiver in the NaDEET office. During office hours, live weather update information is now available on our website at: [www.nadeet.org/weather](http://www.nadeet.org/weather). Since the station has been fully installed at the beginning of July, our record high temperature of 32°C was within five days of our record low of -2.7°C. The desert truly has extreme temperatures.

Thank you to NamibRand for giving us this opportunity to assist in monitoring weather patterns on the Reserve.



## Sanitation for a Healthy Environment: Is it Really that Stinky?



Although clean, adequate sanitation is a fundamental human right approximately 2.6 billion people worldwide do not have access to it. In Namibia more than 50% of the population uses the “bush toilet” on a regular basis. This is a topic however that people do not readily talk about.

The latest issue of the *Bush Telegraph* challenges people’s current perceptions of sanitation and offers several environmentally friendly options to address this worldwide sanitation crisis. For example, ecological sanitation is a method that recycles human waste as a fertilizer thereby putting the nutrients back into the soil. Current sanitation practices are not just an issue for the developing world, but also worldwide. The commonly used ‘flush and discharge’ method in the developed world also needs to be reevaluated as it depends on high consumption of water and energy to operate. In response to goal #7 of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)- To ensure environmental sustainability– sanitation methods need to be improved globally.

In 2009, the *Bush Telegraph* is generously funded by the UNESCO– Windhoek office to promote the 2005-2014 Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). A total of 13,000 copies have been printed and distributed to the *Bush Telegraph* Reader Club and other organizations working directly with sanitation. This issue of the *Bush Telegraph* is also available as a downloadable PDF file from our website at: [www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html](http://www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html)

## Successful Fundraiser in USA

On 29 May a successful fundraiser for NaDEET was held in the United States. The fundraiser was hosted by the Second Congregational Church of Greenwich, Connecticut, a long time supporter of NaDEET. The event featured performances by cast members from Broadway's *The Lion King*, as well as other singers and dancers, all volunteering their time to raise money and awareness for NaDEET's environmental education programmes.

A new short documentary about NaDEET was premiered. This film was generously produced, written, and directed by volunteer Branan Edgens, and will become available to a wider audience soon. Guests were also engaged first hand in NaDEET’s work by a demonstration solar oven and solar baked snacks and waste bins made from recycled plastic bags. Namibian crafts and artwork were also for sale.



Chris Cargill demonstrating his homemade solar oven to fundraiser guests

The fundraiser successfully raised just over US\$18 500, with the help of fiscal sponsorship from Yes is a World, a registered U.S. non-profit organization, and an anonymous matching donation. The fundraiser was conceptualised and organised by long-time NaDEET volunteer and supporter, Sarah Bittenbender. Thank you to everyone who attended and who donated! NaDEET relies on our private donors to successfully implement our aims.

## NEWS-NaDEET Annual Essay Contest– Kunene Region

The 3rd annual NEWS-NaDEET essay contest was held in the Kunene Region this year. The essay contest aims to engage schoolchildren in current environmental topics and debates relevant to their region. This year’s NEWS-NaDEET essay contest addressed the topic of the sustainable utilisation of wildlife as a response to the 2008 elephant trophy hunting debate in the Kunene Region. Although tremendous effort was made to inform all qualifying schools in the region, we had a disappointing turnout with only two schools submitting entries. We are unsure why the turnout was so low as we do not know if the correct teachers received the information, the essay topic was too difficult or if there was another reason unknown to us. We are looking into the reasons and are evaluating if we should continue this project in the coming year.

We do congratulate the learners that participated in the essay contest for a job well done. The first place was awarded to Samingo Kasaona from Jacob Basson Combined School and second place was given to Ileni Shithigona from Otjikondo Primary School.

*“Sustainable utilisation of wildlife means how we manage and use the wild animals in a very good way that we don’t reduce the number of wild animals. The wildlife in this area is not used sustainably, because people don’t understand that wildlife can be utilised to avoid long term effects and others are poaching while they know that is the only source of income.”- Samingo Kasaona, grade 9, Jacob Basson Combined School*

## Changes at the NaDEET Team

Several mid-year changes have taken place at the NaDEET Team. At our annual trustee meeting in May, we welcomed Uda Nakamhela to our Board of Trustees. He has taken the place of Dorothé Klein, one of our founding trustees. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dorothé Klein for more than six years of dedication and service to NaDEET. She has promised that although she is formally stepping down, she will always be there when we are in need. In June we then said goodbye to staff members Stephan Trappe, our first year-long “weltwärts” volunteer, and Vicky Endjala, a six month Nature Conservation In-Service Training student. Both made considerable contributions to NaDEET and we wish them luck in their studies.

### NaDEET Welcomes New Trustee Uda Nakamhela



Uda Nakamhela is a practicing attorney in Windhoek. His focus area is on conservation law, especially in regards to community based conservation. He has previously worked for the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) in the Community Based Natural Resource Management Unit. We are excited to have Uda as part of the NaDEET Team and believe that he will bring new dimensions to our organisation.

### Reflections from NaDEET Volunteer, Stephan Trappe

In June my year-long service as a “weltwärts”-volunteer at NaDEET drew to a close with me heading off to take the remainder of my annual leave. Being the first NaDEET volunteer through this specific programme and thus somewhat of a trailblazer, I often reflected on the many valuable experiences – professional and personal alike – this past year has endowed me with. It is those experiences I would like to share here.

Throughout my time I frequently felt that this was a year of great change and transformation for NaDEET. Among many other memories, I summoned back my first few weeks taking steps in a new and strange environment, thought of the first group I was able to accompany to the Centre and remembered finishing the building project and moving into the new staff quarters. In retrospect, however, I realise that what I was experiencing was merely the face of an extraordinarily dynamic organisation. Exciting things are always happening at NaDEET.

The experience overall has not only given me a deep insight into the daily operations of a small NGO, but has also introduced me to many challenges and rewards. As a volunteer at NaDEET, I have been empowered with many new skills and have built upon old ones by being active in fields ranging from administrative work to assisting lessons at the Centre. I am proud to have seen many of my humble contributions come to fruition. The benefits of this opportunity have been immeasurable for me personally. As a foreigner visiting Namibia (and Africa) for the very first time, I have learned to love the land and its people. For young adults like me working and travelling abroad is a tremendously shaping experience, a chance to grow in character and a vivid memory for a lifetime. Moreover, it has been a truly intercultural encounter. I have learned much about the people and traditions of this incredibly diverse country, but I feel like I have also been able to reciprocate part of this.

The past year has truly been an adventure in every sense and has been a personal success beyond my expectations. I would hereby like to extend a heartfelt thank you to NaDEET as an organisation and no less all my colleagues, which give NaDEET its identity, for shaping my Namibian experience. May both future volunteers and NaDEET continue on this mutually beneficial path.

*Stephan Trappe*

### Soil Movement Study by Nature Conservation Student

Soil movement is one of the environmental problems facing the world today. I did a study to compare soil movement in vegetated and non-vegetated areas in the dunes near NaDEET.

The objectives of the study were to:

- determine the rate at which soil is moved around poles and Camel thorn trees;
- investigate which areas (vegetated or non vegetated) are likely to have more soil added and/or removed
- investigate why soil is moved from such areas and not others.

From the study, I found out that it took about 5 months for 2 - 10 cm of soil to be moved around the tar poles while there was no movement at the Camel thorn trees.

If you are interested in reading my project report, please visit

[www.nadeet.org/capacityBuilding.html](http://www.nadeet.org/capacityBuilding.html)

*Vicky Endjala*



*Stephan and Vicky on a hike on NamibRand*

### THE MOLE FILE

**Fact No. 10:**  
“Camouflage”



Share Net

Although the Golden Mole spends most of its time below the surface, it has golden brown, reddish hair colour. In the reddish Namib sand, this keeps the Golden Mole well camouflaged from predators.

# NADEET thanks our 1 March-30 June 2009 donors:

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**Windhoek Liaison:** Monika Diehl



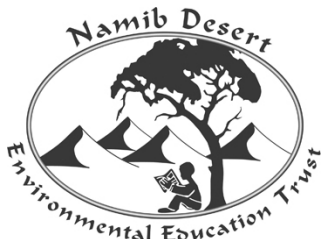
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YES IS A WORLD



Working towards a Namibia with  
environmentally-empowered citizens  
making decisions for a sustainable future.



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