

THE GOLDEN MOLE



NADEET'S Endemic Newsletter

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Introductory Issue

February 2003

Why the Namib?

Environmental Education (EE) can and does occur in any location; however there are distinct advantages to creating an EE programme based at a desert centre.

The Namib Desert is Namibia's namesake yet most Namibians, especially youth, have never seen the magic of the Namib. This is unfortunate as such a significant natural heritage should be enjoyed by all of Namibia's citizens. Currently there are few affordable opportunities for Namibia's youth to visit the Namib making this an even greater challenge. To the unknown visitor, images of this desert often include barren, uninhabitable landscapes.

The Namib Desert drastically changes from the far North to the far South as it stretches along the whole Atlantic coastline of Namibia. In the South lies the Pro-Namib and the NamibRand Nature Reserve. This living desert has a vegetated rolling dune landscape and is inhabited by a fascinating biodiversity.

The unique adaptations needed for survival in the Namib is one of the many hands-on experiential learning opportunities for participants of the NaDEET EE Centre. The vastness and inherent beauty of the Namib provides an ideal setting for self-exploration, reflection and environmental learning.

Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future: Empowering Namibia's Youth

The link between a healthy natural environment and an equally healthy quality of human life has long-since been established. Education about the natural environment is also not new; however, it is constantly changing and evolving. Environmental Education (EE) today is trying to meet the challenges presented by the continual deterioration of the natural environment and therefore the decline of the quality of life for all on planet Earth. The Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) was established in August 2002 to participate in the efforts to change this current trend.

NaDEET believes it can significantly contribute to Namibian EE by promoting not only awareness and knowledge, but also environmentally-minded attitudes and skills in Namibia's youth and educators. NaDEET aspires for the young people *to choose to participate* in finding viable solutions to their local and national environmental issues to create a sustainable future for all.

NaDEET's main aims are:

- To provide a non-profit environmental education service for the learners and educators of Namibia based in the beauty and magic of the Namib Desert.
- To build capacity and know-how at all levels of the environmental education sector: focussed on addressing relevant environmental issues, supporting the Namibian school curricula and practicing hands-on experiential learning and "learner-centred learning" educational methods.
- To engage in education, advocacy and awareness of the critical role of sustainable living in a finite semi- arid environment.

The Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust intends to fulfil these aims through various activities. The heart of these activities is the Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre on Die Duine Farm in the NamibRand Nature Reserve. The EE Centre will offer a variety of programmes for primary and secondary schoolchildren, as well as for educators and tertiary level students. Volunteer and training programmes in environmental education will also be open to secondary and tertiary level students. NaDEET intends to support the environmental learning at the EE Centre with the At-School-Programme (ASP) to conduct preparatory and follow-up EE activities. The development of activity books, a mini-magazine and other learning support materials will also facilitate the environmental learning at the EE Centre, at school (ASP) and at home.

The *Golden Mole* is produced by

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A Model of Sustainable Living: *The Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre*

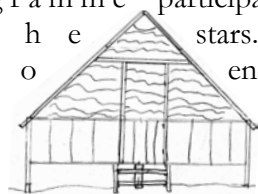


Our Philosophy: NaDEET aims to create an Environmental Education Centre that promotes and facilitates hands-on experiential learning in a desert environment. By using an innovative design, alternative technology and living techniques, the Centre is to be a model and experience in sustainable living. Programme participants will not only feel the powers of the sun in the Namib, but will experience first-hand the sun's ability to light a room and to cook a meal. The very nature of the Centre will therefore support the EE programme specifically designed for each

visiting group. To explore some aspects of the Centre based on this philosophy, the design is divided into the three basic necessities for sustaining life: food, water and shelter.

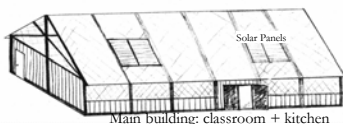
Shelter:

Why do we need to have any buildings at all? During the design phase, this question was often posed in regards to the accommodation units as it seemed that the programme participants could just sleep outside under the stars. However, NaDEET also wanted to ensure that the visitors did have a certain amount of comfort and more importantly some protection from the elements. As the EE Centre has an active full educational programme, it was believed that by creating a harmony between protection, comfort and the desert magic NaDEET's objectives would best be supported. The accommodation units and the main building are therefore designed with this idea in mind.



The EE Centre will host groups up to forty learners, however, smaller groups will be encouraged. A total of six accommodation units are to be built. Each unit can sleep up to eight learners, with one unit designated for the accompanying adults. The unit is to be built on a platform with a metre high wooden wall. The roof is to be of shade cloth to provide the protection needed yet also give the participants an opportunity to admire the night sky.

The main building of the Centre is to be the dining hall/classroom with a kitchen and storage attached. The roof and "windows" are to be shade cloth. This design will give the protection sought from an indoor environment for some educational activities, food preparation and storage, however, still give a sense of openness. Power for lights and a refrigerator are to come from solar electricity.



Water: A constant concern in Namibia, especially in the desert, is water. Although water will be supplied from a local bore-

hole, there will be no "running" water at the NaDEET Centre. As part of the design philosophy, the principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle are to be used as a guideline. The primary focus for the Centre will be to reduce the amount of water used in the first place. Programme participants will therefore need to define the difference between "luxury water" vs. "need water".

To help facilitate participants to limit, as well as be aware of their water consumption, one of the techniques used will be bucket showers. Part of the Centre's aim is to teach skills that participants can take home with them and be able to implement at an affordable cost. Therefore bucket showers need to be a positive experience and not a "freezing" event for the participants. Participants will be able to take advantage of the sun's energy and have a *hot* bucket shower by simply using black containers to heat water during the day that can then be filled into the bucket.



The waste water produced from the bucket showers and more importantly the kitchen are to be reused. As the amount of water is to be minimal, small-scale "water reuse" methods are to be explored. Participants will be able to experiment with various methods, for example using the waste water for trees or herbs, to discover their advantages and disadvantages and design their own methods.

Food:

Although the technology for solar cooking has been available for a long time, its acceptance and use has been minimal in Namibia. Several factors influence this resistance, however, the main hindrance is most likely that solar cooking is simply not culturally accepted. People know how to prepare their food over a fire or gas stove. Solar cooking is something new, that does require different skills and time scheduling.

NaDEET would like the participants to have practical hands-on experiences in solar cooking to gain a skill and

(Continued on page 3)

The Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre is not just a place to stay, but a living experience.

Who is who at NaDEET?

Viktoria Paulick, Environmental Education (EE) Director, has come to NaDEET to develop and run the EE Programme and Namib Desert EE Centre.

During NaDEET's initial start-up period, Viktoria is actively designing appropriate activities and developing the EE programme for the Centre. During March and April she will be visiting schools, primarily in Namibia's South, to speak with teachers and principals about NaDEET's EE programmes for learners. During these visits she will also conduct EE sessions with groups of selected learners.



Viktoria has been active in the environmental education field in Namibia since January 1999. Over the last four years, Viktoria established and directed the EE Programme for the AfriCat Foundation in Otjiwarongo. Viktoria has educated over 20 000 school children at the AfriCat EE Centre on Okonjima Farm or at learners' schools during the School Outreach Programme throughout Namibia. Viktoria also focussed her energies and talents on developing environmental education support learning materials such as the *Namibian Large Carnivore Activity Book* and a tri-annual environmental mini-magazine for youth, the *Carnivore Times*.

Viktoria originally came to Namibia as a volunteer from the United States through the non-profit organisation, WorldTeach. Viktoria's family originates from Hamburg, Germany, however has resided in the New York area for over twenty years. She completed her tertiary education at Bowdoin University in Maine, USA, with a B.A. in Environmental Studies. As her main focus was the African environment, she completed a part of her studies in Botswana.

Andreas Keding is NaDEET's design and construction manager.



Andreas is instrumental in NaDEET's beginnings. He is responsible for the design and construction of the Namib Desert Environmental Education Centre. Andreas has also upgraded a store room at Tok Tokkie Trails into an office space for NaDEET's use.

Andreas previously worked for Okonjima Lodge in Otjiwarongo as Senior Guide and Assistant Farm and Lodge Manager for the last 3 ½ years. As senior guide, he was responsible for organising trails and managing the "trackers". Behind the scenes, he was involved with various aspects of farm and vehicle maintenance. Andreas participated in several aspects of the development of a 4 000 hectare cheetah rehabilitation and game camp on Okonjima farm. Most importantly, as part of his guiding work, he radio-tracked and monitored the cheetah and leopard population in the game camp on a daily basis.

Andreas has lived in Namibia for the last ten years. He completed his schooling at the Deutsche Hoehere Privat Schule (DHPS) in Windhoek. Andreas then received his diploma of Natural Resource Management (Nature Conservation) from the Polytechnic of Namibia. Although his family originates from Hermannsburg, Germany, Andreas spent his childhood years in Kwa-Zulu Natal. His father, Bishop Reinhard Keding from the Evangelische Lutherische Kirche in Namibia (DELK) and two of his four siblings reside in Windhoek.

(Continued from page 2)

the confidence to apply their knowledge at home. In small groups, participants will prepare meals using solar cookers and ovens for the whole group to eat. The participants will be able to learn from a personal experience how to prepare a good nutritious meal in an "alternative" manner.



Parabolic Solar Cooker

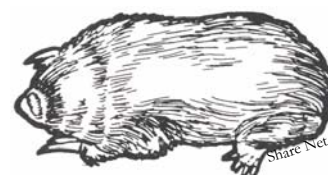
Again the principle of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle will be adhered to as food scraps will be "recycled" in the Centre's compost, tins and glass will be reused at the Centre or brought to a recycling facility.

THE MOLE FILE

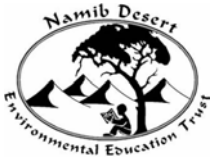
Fact No. 25

"The Enormous Middle Ear"

If the Golden Mole were the same size as a human, then its middle ear would be as large as the middle ear of an elephant.



Share Net



NADEET thanks all of our supporters!

INDIVIDUALS (In alphabetical order)

Oliver Abraham

Alberto Fossati Bellaqi

Giammaruto & Desiree Casucci

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Fraas Family

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Gerd and Rosemie Steffan

Volker Thullesen

Suzanne van Vliet

Madeleine Wittenbergh-Poussant

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A special thank you to:

Marianne Berker

Ian Gallagher

Jürgen & Dorothe Klein

NamibRand Nature Reserve

Wulf & Renate Paulick

Tok Tokkie Trails



I would like to support NADEET with the following generous donation:

€ 1.500,- will enable an entire school class to visit the EE Centre for a 2-day/ 2-night programme

€ 750,- will help create environment-friendly education facilities (solar power, water recycling etc.)

€ 50,- will enable one Namibian child to visit the EE Centre for a 2-day/ 2-night programme

€ _____ (My own amount)

Your address, so that we can send you a copy of our newsletter:

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Donations can be made as a cheque, postal order or as a bank transfer to:

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Please enclose this form with your donation and post to: **NADEET, P.O. Box 31017, Pioneers Park, Windhoek, Namibia**

Sponsors will receive our newsletter, which includes updates on current programme activities, site development and visiting groups. **Thank you very much! Your help is greatly appreciated!**