

Vol. 6, No. 2

THE GOLDEN MOLE

NADEET's Endemic Newsletter



November 2008

Happy 5th Birthday NaDEET Centre!

The month of October held a very special birthday! It was the 5th anniversary of NaDEET Centre's official opening ceremony held on 24 October 2003. Together with visiting schoolchildren from Danie Joubert PS in Mariental, we celebrated the birthday party in the morning with a solar-baked banana muffin "birthday cake" and candles. NaDEET staff and the children also recognised NaDEET's achievements by making a human "5".

To date close to 3 500 people in over 100 groups have come to NaDEET Centre to participate in our sustainable living programme - an achievement to be proud of!

NaDEET Reflects on Environmental Education

NaDEET Centre certainly would not have come this far over the last five years, if NaDEET staff were not committed to constantly evaluating, developing and striving for further improvement of its environmental education programme. As Dr. Claudia Harvey of UNESCO-Windhoek Cluster Office aptly pronounced during the official opening ceremony of NaDEET Centre:

"Environmental education is one of the essential instruments for empowering individuals and communities to take meaningful action and positively shape their future."

In this context NaDEET has recently assessed all aspects of the Centre management, infrastructure and education programmes. Based on the outcomes of these evaluations and as a supplement to our three year strategic plan 2008-2010, a NaDEET Centre two year plan was developed including the following vision:

To be a leader and model of Centre-based sustainable living education



Top: Learners from Danie Joubert joining the celebration, Middle: Making a symbolic human five
Bottom: Solar baked banana muffins as a birthday cake . Photos: Stephan Trappe

The Dolphin Secondary School Wins First Prize in Essay Contest about Mining

The NEWS-NaDEET Annual Essay Contest was this year claimed by Ivan Blazic a grade 9 learner of the Dolphin Secondary School from Walvis Bay. Ivan was one of 30 learners that entered this year's contest held in the Erongo Region on the topic of mining. The grade 8 and 9 learners from Ivan's school received a free trip to NaDEET Centre from the 22-26 September as the first place prize. The learners were rewarded with a week of environmental learning and fun filled time at our sustainable living centre. Accompanied by their two dedicated teachers, Mrs.Deyzel and Mrs.Van Zyl, the group had a memorable experience of the southern Namib Desert ecosystem which offered a different environment in comparison to the coastal part of the Namib they are more familiar with.

Apart from the sustainable living activities, learners of the Dolphin Secondary School, also enjoyed the vast landscapes on the NamibRand Nature Reserve where NaDEET Centre is situated. The scenery consists of four main habitats: mountain ranges, salt pans, gravel plains and the sand dunes. It is worth mentioning that each habitat has distinct fauna and flora although they all share the same desert ecosystem. These also led the learners to realise that although both NaDEET and Walvis Bay

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NaDEET is a registered non-profit
trust in Namibia.

Trust Certificate #: T168/ 2003

Trustees: C. Berker, E. Dürr, D. Klein
Director: V. Keding

(Continued on page 2)



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are within the Namib Desert they have different climatic conditions which in turn have a major impact on the two desert environments. For example, the coastal desert ecosystem is shaped by the regular presence of fog, while further inland this source of water is rare. Furthermore, the Dolphin Secondary School learners demonstrated in-depth understanding and awareness of the environmental issues they engaged in at NaDEET Centre. This was exhibited in the Enviro quiz game, which assesses the level of learners' understanding of sustainable living and the environment. The competition amongst learners was so high that the winner was only determined by a slim margin, thus demonstrating good environmental knowledge and understanding.

It is crucial for young Namibians to expand on these environmental skills in order to constructively take part in the development of their country. The potential environmental impacts of the mining industry in the Erongo Region due to the uranium boom are immense. We are therefore grateful that the two currently active uranium mines, Rössing Uranium and Langer Heinrich Uranium, have made a positive contribution to environmental education by co-funding this year's essay contest on 'The Impact of Mining in the Erongo Region'. We look forward to building on this foundation to continue to provide valuable environmental education programmes for all.

The NEWS-NaDEET essay contest will be held next year in the Kunene Region and will address the topic of the sustainable use of natural resources, especially wildlife.

F. Simasiku

Frederick Simasiku, Stephan Trappe, Tanya Deyzel, Ivan Blazic, Viktoria Keding and Jonas Hausiku lining up to congratulate Ivan on his excellent efforts. Photo: Stephan Trappe



NaDEET Building & Renovation Project Nears Completion

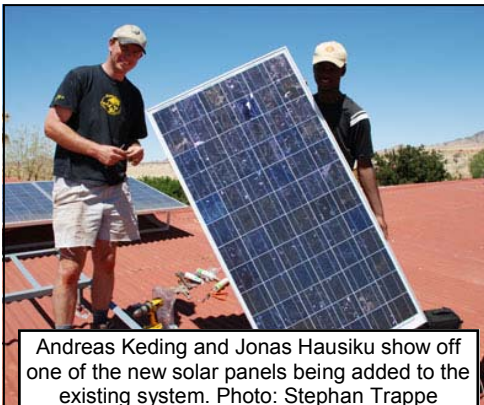
British High Commission sponsors new solar panels

After three months of arduous work from both the hired builders and NaDEET staff all major infrastructural improvements at NaDEET Base have been completed! Even though smaller jobs are still waiting to be finished, the new and renovated bedrooms, large en-suite bathrooms, roomy communal kitchen and beautiful dining room are now fully furnished, occupied and much appreciated as NaDEET common space.

In order to stay cost-efficient NaDEET staff completed the painting of the new spaces. Soon afterwards all staff were over-ready and wildly excited to move in and enjoy the unprecedented comforts – namely two large modern showers, a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient refrigerator and deep-freezer and a dining room exerting a welcoming, communal air as new common ground.

The final phase of improvements is due to be finished by January 2009. At present, further communal shaded parking area and a

fence around NaDEET base are being added. The latter will soon be home to an attractive succulent stone garden including an easily-accessible solar cooking area just outside the kitchen and dining room. There we will encourage staff to practice alternative cooking methods whenever possible and hope to



Andreas Keding and Jonas Hausiku show off one of the new solar panels being added to the existing system. Photo: Stephan Trappe

also draw the interest of tourists visiting our neighbours Tok Tokkie Trails. Finally, the future backyard area at the western flank of the building will provide yet another communal space for NaDEET staff. This spot in front of the staff quar-

ters will include an arrangement of stones and succulents, a seating area and hammock, a small vegetable garden and a braai place. A fence of wooden poles will seclude the area providing quietness and privacy.

Furthermore, NaDEET Base is now drawing its electricity from its very own, and fully independent solar system! It is comprised of 16 solar panels which feed the generated electricity into a 24-volt battery system to provide carbon-free electricity. Two solar regulators are responsible for managing the power flow to and from the batteries, while a power inverter transforms the current into 230 volts common with all appliances. Using highly energy-efficient appliances in the staff quarters and office as well as conserving electricity whenever possible are the two main factors that empower NaDEET to completely accommodate all of our energy needs without utilising fossil fuels. Thank you to the British High Commission for making this possible!

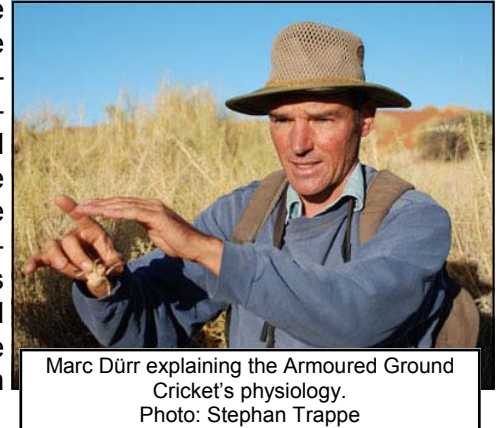
S. Trappe

Desert Guiding Course Returns to NaDEET

The Namibian Academy for Tourism and Hospitality (NATH) Desert Guiding Level-4 Course returned to centre stage in the heart of the familiar landscape of the Namib Desert. Lasting for duration of one week the course took place from the 1-8th November 2008. This year's course was attended by 26 participants including two NaDEET staff, Stephan Trappe and Frederick Simasiku that benefited from the mutual relationship existing between NATH and NaDEET. By offering our facilities for the guiding course at no cost, NATH allows two NaDEET staff members to attend the guiding course in return. This not only offers an ideal learning environment for the course participants, but it also ensures that NaDEET meets its goal of capacity building.

Participants for this year's Desert Guiding course ranged from fulltime employed guides, NATH students, and unemployed guides to a few individuals who took part for general interest. Presented by two nature enthusiasts and professional guides, Marc Dürr and Peter Bridgeford, participants were rewarded for the inquisitive role they played during the entire duration of the course. The surrounding desert environment made learning easier due to the availability of a variety of fauna and flora species that are adapted well to the desert ecosystem that exist close to NaDEET Centre.

Overall, contemporary guiding approaches and methodologies were presented to participants during the course ensuring that all were made aware of alternative techniques to improve their overall guiding skills. Participants were also afforded with an opportunity to voice challenges affecting their daily work-related activities in general. Most participants admitted that the guiding course was a success because their expectations were fully met and the material they learned will enable them to become more efficient in their work. For NaDEET staff, this course gave us the opportunity to improve our knowledge of the desert. Our work at NaDEET requires us to educate school children about the desert ecosystem. The NATH guiding course sharpened our skills by improving our knowledge of some desert adapted plants and animals. We also enhanced our communication skills which is always useful when working with children.



Marc Dürr explaining the Armoured Ground Cricket's physiology.
Photo: Stephan Trappe

F. Simasiku

I Am a Coastodian, Are You?

The Namibian Coast Conservation and Management (NACOMA) Project of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has recently launched a marketing campaign to protect the Namibian coast. This includes the "Coastodian" logo and slogan "I am a coastodian, are you?" NaDEET teamed up with NACOMA to produce an issue of our youth magazine, *The Bush Telegraph*, focused on coastal issues.

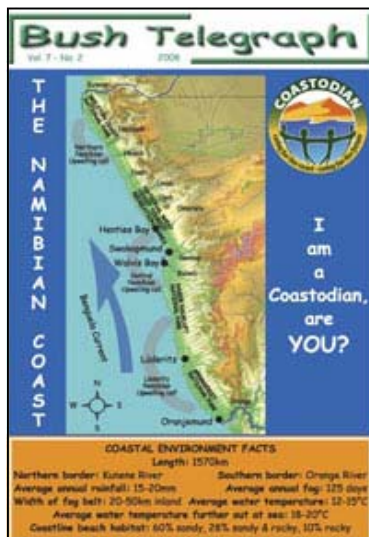
The 1570 km long Namibian coastline is mostly not suitable for human habitation as the ocean meets the Namib Desert. Some of the most important areas for plants and animals coincide with human settle-

ment. This presents a challenge to protect Namibia's unique lichens, birds and other coastal inhabitants in the context of rapid development due to tourism and the uranium boom. "The Namibian Coast" *Bush Telegraph* highlighted the environmental impacts including high consumption of fresh water and energy, high population density and a dependency on limited resources.

The Bush Telegraph was distributed to our regular readership and to all of the schools in the four political regions along the coast. It will also be distributed with the upcoming Namibian Environment and Wildlife Society *Roan News* magazine as its official youth

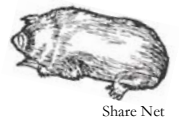
supplement. "The Namibian Coast" issue is available for all as a downloadable file on our website at: www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html

V. Keding



THE MOLE FILE

Fact No. 5: "Relations"



Share Net

The Golden Mole is in no way related to the mole common in the Northern Hemisphere. In fact, Grant's Golden Mole has been placed in a new superorder called Afrotheria. The mammals classified in this order have a common African ancestor and although they may look similar to mammals from Europe or other parts of the world, their genetics and behaviours are quite different.

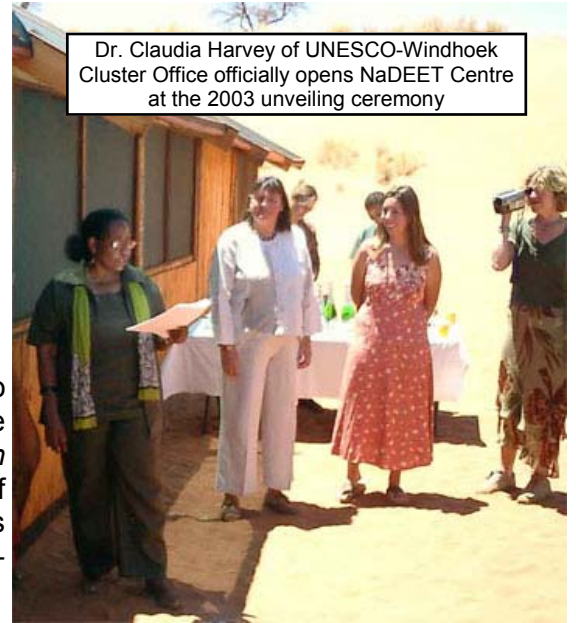
A History of NaDEET Centre

Since its foundation NaDEET Centre has developed and grown from strength to strength. In light of the Centre's fifth anniversary we felt it appropriate to recap the course NaDEET Centre has followed. Take a trip through our little scrap book and see how five years have shaped a rich history of environmental education at a one-of-a-kind sustainable living facility.



2003

The construction of NaDEET Centre took place from March to October 2003. It was accomplished by Andreas Keding, the then Building Manager, with his team of four assistants. *Raleigh International* also provided us with volunteers over a period of three months. With generous financial and material donations the "recycled" NaDEET Centre was built as a model of sustainable living with a limited budget.



2004
Right from the beginning teachers and schools showed a great interest in NaDEET Centre as seen in 501 participants during our first full year of operation. Quickly initial doubts concerning the feasibility of the Centre were washed away in the stream of visitors.



2005
The unexpected good rain of the previous year encouraged us to implement several improvements in 2005. Firstly, we rain proofed the main building by inserting plastic sheeting between the two existing shade cloth layers. Secondly, we added much needed teacher and staff accommodations at the Centre. Up until the end of 2005 the Centre was solely run by Viktoria Keding and a nature conservation student, but now the increasing number of staff had to be accommodated.





2006

The devastating events of the June 2006 fire called for plenty of improvisation to keep the regular programme progressing. Despite the fire we only had to cancel one school group as we set up a temporary classroom under a large tent. Nonetheless, the new building was erected in record time, so only three groups had to use the tented classroom. Even though the fire was a catastrophe, we were able to use it as an opportunity to make improvements. We made three major design changes to the new main building: 1) a corrugated iron roof, 2) a 90° rotation of the structure and 3) a wooden floor. In November yet another accommodation unit for staff and teachers was added.



2007

Our programme continued to grow and develop during this year with the new building gaining its own momentum and creating its own history. Highlights of the year included welcoming back many returnee schools, launching of the annual NEWS/NaDEET essay contest and hiring additional educator staff members to run the programme.



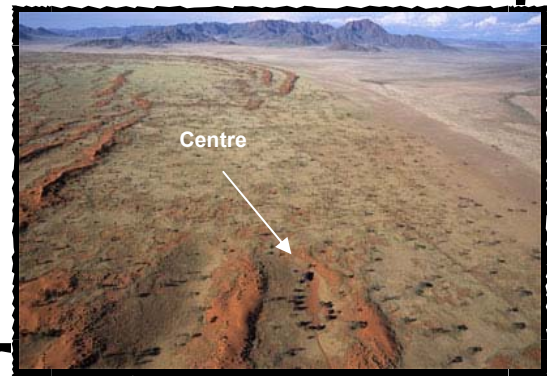
The Group housing stands tall ever since its erection in 2003.

2008

As the year comes to an end, NaDEET Centre has once again enlivened many children's perspectives on the environment. The main building received further improvements with an enlarged solar deck, resized garden and a solar water heater for the kitchen. It is fair to say that we can proudly look back at another successful year in NaDEET history.



S. Trappe



Getting to NaDEET Centre

Transportation to NaDEET Centre remains one of the main challenges for most groups wanting to participate in our programme. The majority of the schools that visit NaDEET Centre have their own school bus or vehicle, or they have outside funding to hire a bus. This unfortunately is not a luxury that most schools in the country share. NaDEET is committed to helping these schools source vehicles and/ or funding.

This year 35% of all visiting groups received transport funding via one of our partner organizations or donors including Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge, Rotary Club-Windhoek, Wolwedans Foundation and the Langer Heinrich Mine through NEWS.

Since 2004 Cambridge Primary School, a local primary school approximately 350 km from NaDEET Centre, has been coming to NaDEET. This is the second year that the Wolwedans Foundation has provided funding for their transport. The school has proven to be very resourceful to minimize these costs in hiring a local farmer's cattle truck. This is not uncommon in Namibia as vehicles are not readily available in rural areas. The children are grateful for any transport provided.

We have recently secured funding for the transport and programme fees for three schools from our region to visit NaDEET Centre in 2009 from the Netherlands Consulate. We continue to look for opportunities to assist schools in traveling to NaDEET Centre.

V. Keding



Happy Cambridge P.S. children on their way home. Photo: Stephan Trappe

Shaping our Youth for a Sustainable Future

Educating for a sustainable future continues taking place at our core project, NaDEET Centre. At the end of the year, we once again reflect on the experiences and challenges we had with different school groups that visited NaDEET Centre from July to October. In total ten youth groups and schools successfully visited the sustainable living centre during this period.

It was rewarding working with different school-children from various regions of the country. A variety of activities and topics were covered which included

biodiversity of the Namib, waste and recycling, alternative energy and resource conservation and utilisation. Amongst the youth groups that visited NaDEET Centre was the Catholic AIDS Action After School Centre from Namibia's main harbor town of Walvis Bay. During their visit in August, these underprivileged children enjoyed every moment as some of the learners have never been outside of Walvis Bay. The children were surprised that

they enjoyed solar cooking the most, as they found it difficult to believe that it even worked. They found cooking with the sun fascinating. The group also liked the nature walk where they learned about different plants and animals of the Namib Desert and how they have adapted to the arid conditions. The children all wrote thank you notes to NaDEET staff when they returned to Walvis Bay. See Vernon's letter to read what impressed him the most.

NaDEET Centre also welcomed the grade 6 learners of the Deutsche Höhere Privat Schule (DHPS) from Windhoek for the fifth year. Most DHPS school-children favoured the nature walk and the games that were played. They also showed an interest in recycling which was evident from the number of recycled fire bricks the learners were able to make. Recycled fire bricks are used in the fuel-efficient stoves for cooking purposes and are mainly made from old newspapers and cardboard boxes. Instead of throwing away these

forms of waste, we recycle and re-use them as energy sources for our fuel-efficient stoves, which allow us to cook before the sun comes up without using an open wood fire. Two of the learners also celebrated their birthdays at the Centre.

The NaDEET staff would like to encourage all learners that participated in our programme to practice what you've learned. Your individual action is a huge contribution towards the wellbeing of the environment. We also give a special thank you to the grade 9 learners of Daweb Junior Secondary School from Maltahöhe for the wonderful environmental dramas presented while at the centre. And, thank you to the Aranos Primary School children for entertaining the NaDEET staff with the lovely songs. You are wonderful singers and brought some great sounds to the centre.

F. Simasiku

Dear NaDEET staff
(I'm) I am wrighting this letter to thank you for all you the good things you taught and did for us there at NaDEET center. We If enjoyed games like the golden mole game and if also enjoyed solar cooking and learn how to save water and energy and I will also try to make my own hot box to keep my food warm and no longer use the micro wave and im busy working on my own hot box. If also learnt that you should always swich off the light when you leave a room thats all that i will say now. I almost forgot to say something and it is At my best day at Na deet whas the day of the knight of the quiz. An Now i am finally finish
From Vernon D

NADEET thanks our 1 August- 31 October 2008 donors:

& Beyond Foundation
 Anonymous
 Hans Dieter and Heidi Brammer
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A special thank you to:



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2. Fill out the form on the website so we know who to send your gift to.
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4. Your donation goes to NaDEET to help educate Namibian children about the environment and sustainable living!

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