

NaDEET Centre is the Heart of the Dark Sky!

What is the thing I will miss the most about this place? The night sky. Since the first night I spent here I have been astonished by the beauty of the outstanding sky. I found it impossible to describe to my friends and relatives so I ended up using an image. I told them to imagine a huge dark blanket; an old blanket, with millions of holes in it through which light escapes – the stars.



NaDEET's sky Photo: George Tucker

Like me, all visitors to the NamibRand Nature Reserve enjoy the rare opportunity to view the whole Southern hemisphere night sky without any obstruction. No wonder that the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) has recognized the NamibRand Nature Reserve (NRNR) as a Gold Tier International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR), the first one in Africa.

NaDEET is proud to have contributed to the achievement of this recognition, by not only reducing the sources of light pollution and carrying out measurements of the darkness, but also because one of the conditions for applying for IDSR status is the presence of an education centre, which teaches about the Earth and sky. NaDEET's astronomy programmes do more than inform about the physical universe – they focus on the importance of the night sky in the cultural heritage of Namibians. Viktoria Keding, NaDEET's Director, explains: "Prior to the NaDEET astronomy activity, even the most basic knowledge about the night sky and the threats posed by light pollution were completely unknown to most Namibian children. This recognition therefore makes our participants aware of just how unique it is to have a dark night sky."

Gold Tier is the term used to describe reserves with nighttime environments that have little to no impact from light pollution and artificial light, which is exactly the case on NamibRand. The remoteness (150 km away from the nearest town and about 500 km away from Namibia's capital city Windhoek), the extremely dry desert air and the minimal light pollution make the sky uniquely dark.

Bob Parks, IDA's Executive Director explains: "The night sky over the NRNR is exceptional, as are the efforts the reserve has taken in modifying its lighting for the sake of its wildlife and visitors".

Dr George Tucker, a retired professor of physics from the USA, who identified the NamibRand as a potential Dark Sky Reserve and led the certification effort, says, "Being recognised as a Gold Tier International Dark Sky Reserve will serve to promote and protect this valuable resource."

All the landowners and representatives of the reserve concessionaries celebrated this special achievement at the NamibRand Nature Reserve Annual General Meeting, which took place on 2 June 2012 at NaDEET Centre.

Naike Marengo

Hardap Region Ministry of Education Strengthens Support to NaDEET



At the end of June, the Hardap Regional Director of the Ministry of Education, Mr. Ben Boys and two colleagues stayed at NaDEET Centre for an overnight visit during a school programme for St.

Joseph's Primary School from Rehoboth. It was a long-awaited meeting that gave NaDEET the opportunity to share with government first-hand the environmental education work that we do and how it supports the Namibian school curriculum. Director Boys and his team were able to assess this through participation in Centre activities, and through documentation that outlines the direct linkages between NaDEET's activities, the Namibian school curriculum and national development agendas.

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"WOW... the stars are so bright and clear here! I'm definitely going to go home and make some covers for the lights at my house." exclaimed a school learner from Empelheim Junior Secondary School.



The new houses all have recycled art light covers made by learners

Up on the dunes, on the edge of NaDEET valley, children are learning about light pollution and why and how to protect the night sky. From constellations in the night sky to the surface of the moon, whatever is seen above our heads, NaDEET staff eagerly discusses with participants.



Have you visited NaDEET on Facebook yet?

"Like" NaDEET and you'll be able to catch all the latest news, photographs, videos and a lot more!

(Continued from page 1)

Director Boys wrote, "Our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to have been introduced to your excellent centre, which is contributing to our sustainable environmental education efforts in Namibia. This office strongly acknowledges the excellent work that you and your entire team are doing in the best interest of our learners, and our Region at large. Thank you for accommodating the Director's team at your facilities. We learned a lot."

NaDEET Centre has been supporting schools in the Hardap Region and nationwide for almost nine years with our "open-door policy". This policy allows all schools to participate regardless of their financial ability due to the generous support of our donors. With five more primary schools participating in our programme for the first time in the past few months, we are coming closer to reaching our current aim to ensure that every school in the Hardap Region has been to NaDEET Centre at least once. This is one of the main outcomes of our European Union funded action entitled "Environmental Education to Empower Namibian Communities to Improve their Living Conditions".

In support of this action, Director Boys has pledged the Hardap Region Ministry of Education to provide transport for the schools from the region that are to take part for the remainder of the EU funded action which ends in December 2013. This is a welcome and much needed contribution, as the high cost of transport in Namibia remains a barrier for most schools. The Regional Director's visit also gave NaDEET the opportunity to obtain input into our developing project ideas to align with Ministry of Education's objectives.

Viktorija Keding

**Riiing, Riiing,
Riiing...**

"Our bus is stuck in the mud can you help?" is the teacher's cry for assistance as NaDEET staff wait for the children's arrival. Groups coming to NaDEET



The bus stuck in the mud

do not always arrive on time nor on their own. After an hour of trying to dig the bus out and 7 hours of ferrying the learners to NaDEET Centre in the pouring rain, in NaDEET vehicles, the children had all finally arrived. Operating a remote environmental education centre requires us to be ready and able to adapt to all new challenges. With the new support from the Ministry of Education, we hope experienced drivers familiar with the road under all conditions will bring groups safely.

AN EXAMPLE OF LINKAGE BETWEEN NaDEET ACTIVITIES & NAMIBIAN CURRICULUM & POLICY

Activity: Solar Cooking & Solar Electricity at NaDEET
Aim: To apply the solar energy concepts to practical sustainable living technologies for electricity and cooking.

Namibian Curriculum links: There are links to English, Home Ecology, Social Studies and Natural Science & Health Education. In grade six for example the Natural Science & Health Education Curriculum states, "Sunlight in our daily lives to understand how small scale solar technology works. Learners should be able to find out about and report on ways of heating and cooking using the sun (e.g. a solar oven)".

Namibia's Vision 2030 Policy: In Chapter 5, pg 10 this vision document states that government is to "implement policies that discourage use of wood for fuel and help combat climate change".

"...it was great to see you again!"

NaDEET is always excited to welcome back children that return with a new class or school. In March we had a wonderful surprise in discovering that one of the visiting teachers had been at NaDEET in 2004 as a schoolgirl! Ms. Chandré Bostaander is now a first year teacher at Aranos Primary School – the same school where she was a student. She wrote, "Thank you all for your warm and welcoming support. As for Viktorija it was great seeing you again. All the best for keeping NaDEET as it is". Thanks Chandré, we hope to see you again next year!



2004

Aranos Primary School



2012

NaDEET Empowers Youth Officers in Environmental Education and Sustainable Living

Fifteen members of the Directorate of Youth took part in a “train the trainers” week at NaDEET Centre from 21-25 May 2012. The programme covered current environmental problems and solutions, educational methods, activity and programme development, and included a session on support material development to enable the participants to improve the quality and content of the environmental education activities they offer to youth nation-wide. A session on “greening” youth centres in all their aspects through infusing sustainable living practices also formed part of the programme.



Building Fuel Efficient Stoves

The training was very successful and all youth officers were enthusiastic participants. One of them commented, “This was my first exposure to environmental education learning and I gained valuable skills that will help me to carry out my work differently”.

In order to improve the ability of the youth officers to implement what they have learned back in their workplaces with

youth, NaDEET provided them with a donation of appropriate sustainable energy technology, namely, 15 fuel-efficient stoves (FES) sponsored by NeoPaints and thanks to the COV fund, a grant-giving organisation from the Netherlands, 10 parabolic solar cookers valued at N\$2000 each. In the final evaluation of the NaDEET programme, 93% of participants responded that they were very certain that they will use the solar cookers with youth.

This training opportunity is part of NaDEET’s European Union funding (2011-2013) which aims to empower Namibian communities to improve their living conditions.

Enthusiastic youth officers reflected this in their evaluations:

“More Namibians need to be educated on sustainable living; so we feel more people need to get this first hand experience as we did. Thank you very much for making this a reality.”

Siegfriedth Bandu !Aebeb, Environmental Education Coordinator of the Directorate of Youth, commented, “I have been trying to bring youth officers responsible for environmental education to NaDEET for many years and am now pleased that it has finally materialised”.

Naike Marengo

“Solar Cook and Save N\$10-N\$40 per Week...”



Interviewing Willemina

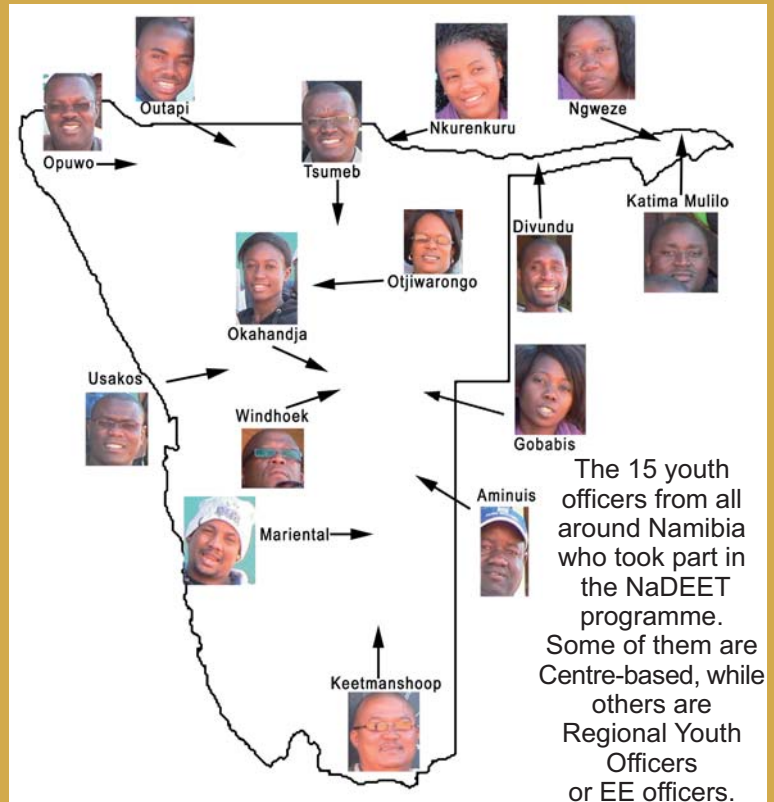
Seven members of the Maltahöhe Community Group who attended NaDEET Centre in November 2011 reported this to NaDEET staff during a follow-up visit to find out if and how they were taking advantage of new technology and practices learned at NaDEET. All of the participants we talked to told us they use their solar cookers at least once a week, but most said they use it every day when there is sun. It was a cold and cloudy day in June when we visited and almost every house we went to were actively using their fuel-efficient stoves. One participant had even built his own fuel-efficient fireplace similar to the design he saw at NaDEET. Only a few participants were making their own recycled firebricks claiming that it was difficult to get sawdust.

Participants told us they were surprised as to how much money they were actually saving. On average community members reported between N\$10-N\$40 per week as they were now buying less wood. That’s a significant saving in anyone’s language! Yet further evidence that you **can** save money and combat climate change – all at the same time.

Congratulations to all those participants who have made the effort to make and sustain a positive change. Keep up the good work!



Proud Abraham shows our staff his own fuel-efficient fireplace



The 15 youth officers from all around Namibia who took part in the NaDEET programme. Some of them are Centre-based, while others are Regional Youth Officers or EE officers.

Secondary School Learners Debate Environmental Issues

"Clean water, clean air, environmental education or a cure for HIV/AIDS?" These environmental and social issues were at the centre of a heated and heavy debate among the Empelheim Junior Secondary School learners. The eighth and ninth grade learners stood behind their decisions and did not budge when challenged. This is similar to global issues hotly contested in international forums such as the recent United Nations Rio +20 Conference. In the lesson "Prioritise your Pyramid", secondary school learners discover how difficult it is to know which sustainable development issues deserve more attention than others. This activity therefore illustrates to young adults that there are no easy answers and engages them in critically thinking about the world to become active global citizens. Try out the game below yourself!

Two other local secondary schools, Daweb and WJD Cloete JSS, also attended NaDEET Centre in July as part of NaDEET's NNF-NedBank Go Green Fund sponsored project. Aiming to improve environmental and critical thought in young adults, this project aims to work with the same schools on an on-going basis. Empelheim, Daweb and WJD Cloete have all been to NaDEET at least once with Daweb attending for the 6th year. The Go Green Fund assists these secondary schools to make the NaDEET programme a part of their school calendar.

To assess improved learning and critical thinking skills, our programme has built continuous assessment into the activities as illustrated in the "Prioritise Your Pyramid" game. Another example is an interactive game entitled "Consumer Survey" which asks learners their attitudes towards the environment and lifestyle choice. Some of the questions include "Do you recycle? Do you think you are part of the environment or do you think humans could survive without it? Do you prefer to drive in a car to school or take public transport?". The consequences of different lifestyle choices are learned and discussed throughout the programme. Learners write a letter to themselves about what they intend to do differently when they return home which we send to them three months later. We are grateful to the NNF-Nedbank Go Green Fund for supporting environmental education for secondary school learners in the Hardap region. As future leaders of the country, they are a valuable resource for Namibia's sustainable development.



Through the "Environmental Problem Tree" the learners explore and learn about the causes and the consequences of environmental problems and look for possible solutions.

Karley Drumm

PRIORITY PYRAMID

What does your Priority Pyramid look like?

Draw a line to choose the 15 issues among the 18 given (included the 2 blank boxes if you have issues which are not listed but you think are more important than some of the given ones) to place them in order of priority. The top box has the most priority and the bottom row the least. The issues you place on the same line have the same importance!

NaDEET Centre Renovation: Phase 2



Schoolchildren enjoying new houses

Thanks to ongoing support from Rotary Club Windhoek and a generous grant from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Windhoek, we can happily report the NaDEET Centre accommodation renovation is complete ahead of schedule!

For many years, NaDEET has been planning to renovate and redesign the Centre accommodation to protect participants from rain and to reduce the impact of cold winters. With rainfall of over 460mm last year and programmes taking place from 1 February to end of November, it was clear the original house design was no longer appropriate.

The decision to replace six learner houses as well as two teacher and staff houses was made in December 2011. Designed by Andreas Keding, the new houses reflect the

style of the main building being set on a wooden platform and follow the building codes of the NamibRand Nature Reserve. The bottom half of the walls are constructed of wood with the upper half made of shade cloth with 50% transparency to retain the outdoor feeling. In contrast to the original design, the new houses are now covered by a corrugated iron roof providing protection from rain and direct sunlight.

As previously reported the building of the first three houses took place during February 2012, while the second three houses, two teacher houses and additional teacher bathroom and urine diversion system (UDS) toilet were built in May. Four NaDEET staff plus five casual workers were part of the building team who worked hard and efficiently to ensure the Centre was closed for groups for the shortest time possible. The houses are still 5m x 5m in size, however with the higher walls and new roof structure, they effectively have more space than the previous A-frame type house. With new bunk beds and firm mattresses, the facilities are appropriate for all ages and give all participants a good night's rest. For accompanying teachers, bus drivers and other visitors during our school programmes, the "teachers' houses" are in the same design as the participants' houses. To provide



Boys relaxing on the new bunk beds

privacy there is a canvas wall in the middle creating two rooms each with two single beds. The new design has an added porch with both doors to the same side compared to the old design with doors on the opposite ends. We are very thankful for all of our sponsors who made this project possible: Speich Education Fund, Freundschaft mit NaDEET, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Rotary Club Windhoek and several private individuals.

Nick Heinke



Old and new "teachers' houses"



With a generous, unexpected donation from InnoSun and a private donor, our next project will be the installation of 27 thin-film module solar panels. The new "solar park" construction will also be utilised as additional learning opportunity and as a visitors' centre.

NaDEET around the world



NaDEET was selected as one of the organisations to be showcased by UNESCO in the

category of Education for Sustainable Development (EDS) at the Rio+20 conference which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012. Absalom Shigwedha, a well-known Namibian environmental journalist, visited NaDEET Centre to experience our school programme first-hand to gather information for the article.

To read the complete article:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216683E.pdf>

To find out more about Rio+20:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org>



Holden, the Golden Mole represented NaDEET in the Conservation Destination Sweepstakes which took place from 22 April to 1 June. Organised by the Namibian Tourism Board (NTB)

to promote Namibia as a tourist destination, this campaign offered North Americans and Namibians the chance to win a ten-day all-inclusive trip around Namibia by "clicking" their favourite of the four characters representing different conservation organisations: *Dara, the Damara Tern* for Nacoma, *Chase Cheetah* for Cheetah Conservation Fund, *Roger Rhino* for Save the Rhino Trust and NaDEET's mascot, *Holden the Golden Mole*. The winners will get the opportunity to visit NaDEET as well as the other environmental organisations which took part in the sweepstakes.

Staff updates



NaDEET is successfully carrying on its "Capacity Building project" by offering students from the Polytechnic of Namibia internship opportunities. Vilho Absalom was at NaDEET as an intern from July to December 2011. He is now part of our permanent staff as an Assistant Environmental Educator.



We also welcome back Viktoria Endjala as our new Centre Assistant. Viktoria was at NaDEET in 2009 whilst a Nature Conservation student at the Polytechnic of Namibia. During her internship here, she completed a research project, "Comparison of Soil Movement in Vegetated and Non Vegetated Areas". We are happy to have "Vicky" back as part of our staff!



Naike Marengo has been our new intern since March. Naike is studying to get a Bachelor's degree in Economics, Tourism and Foreign Languages at the "University of Aosta Valley" in Aosta, Italy and is at NaDEET on a study permit. She is working on reinforcing the connection between NaDEET and the tourists who visit our Centre in order to spread the word about NaDEET as well as maximising financial support for our activities.



Congratulations to Maria Alweendo, our former Sustainable Kitchen manager, on her wedding to Kleophas Shilongo on 12th May 2012 in Onamundindi (Ogongo).

The NamibRand Nature Reserve ranger Quintin Hartung took the chance to visit NaDEET Centre in June when his sister, Lohann, was taking part in our programme with the Origo Primary School.



Volunteering at NaDEET: A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity!



Nick and NaDEET learners

After finishing school last year in Germany, volunteering with the GIZ "weltwärts" programme seemed to be the right thing for me to do before starting university. After a year at NaDEET I can absolutely confirm that I made the right decision. Going abroad, working with a local organisation and getting to know a country and its people, that is what you want to do as a volunteer and what I found at NaDEET.

"Practice what we teach" - monitoring solar electricity, pumping water and saving it by taking bucket showers, learning how to cook with the power of the sun... - and living in the desert made me understand and come back to the basics and start living a sustainable lifestyle. Because, being personally committed and involved

to what one is teaching is an important part of education.

At NaDEET we have a clear mission, that of creating a sustainable future for Namibia, and we do everything possible to fulfill it. By encouraging change at the individual and community level (and not only at a political level), change is really possible as I saw while doing follow-up evaluations with some of the community groups which have been at NaDEET.

Moreover, being able to sponsor a group to come to NaDEET through the money raised on a charity run organised by my sister's school in Germany let me see directly how big an impact a donation can make. As a result of my year at NaDEET, I know that my volunteering service will not end when I leave. Awareness about this unique project should be done more and that will be something I will continue to work on.

Nick Heinke

We welcome Juliane Piloith as our 5th GIZ "weltwärts" volunteer. NaDEET has worked with GIZ (former DED) since 2008 and US Peace Corps since 2010. These organisations place volunteers with us for at least one year, providing much needed support to NaDEET.

NaDEET thanks our on-going donors and supporters



Our 1 March - 31 July 2012 donors were:

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Vernon Swanepoel

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Marseille Namibie

Bernard Pinon

Sandra Dantu

Sapphire Foundation

For Time and effort...

Freundschaft mit NaDEET Committee

Monika Diehl

George Tucker

Olaf Keding



Botschaft
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NamibRand
Nature Reserve



A SPECIAL
THANK YOU
to:



... and all of its donors!

WE NEED YOUR HELP



NaDEET depends on individual donations to fund our environmental education projects. Most Namibian school children and their families cannot afford to cover the cost of a NaDEET Centre programme. It is however one of NaDEET's core principles to provide environmental education for everyone, regardless of their financial means.

Please help us with a donation today!

One child for one day N\$165 (€17, US\$22)

One child for one week N\$660 (€68, US\$88)

One school group for one week N\$22,000 (€2,200, US\$3000)

One community member one day N\$250 (€25, US\$30)

YES, I would like to support NaDEET!

My donation: (amount)
Send us your contact details to receive our newsletter and to thank you!

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Your help is greatly appreciated!

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

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NaDEET Structure and staff

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Centre Manager/Environmental Educator:

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Assistant Environmental Educator:

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Sustainable Living Kitchen Manager:

Elizabeth Lammert

GIZ "weltwärts" Volunteers:

Nick Heinke (July 2011-July 2012)

Environmental Education Intern:

Viktoria Endjala (July-December 2012)

Intern: Naike Marengo (March-December 2012)



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