

THE GOLDEN MOLE

NaDEET's Endemic Newsletter



Vol. 3, No 2

August 2005

NaDEET Centre booming with activity and schoolchildren!

With two school terms in 2005 finished, NaDEET Centre has been almost fully booked. To date this year we have had eleven school groups participate in the sustainable living programme. This is already a total of 506 participants. Five of these participating schools were returnees from last year. In most cases the groups were accompanied by teachers who felt that the NaDEET Centre programme and experience is appropriate. Therefore the teachers returned with new groups of learners.

When can school groups come to NaDEET Centre?

NaDEET Centre is officially open from 1. February until early December. School groups may come during the school terms as well as during the holidays. It is preferred that groups come from a Monday to Friday, but groups are also accommodated over weekends.

The majority of schools have actually been coming during school time. As the NaDEET programme directly supports and covers parts of the Namibian school curriculum, it is in the learners' and teachers' interest. From a NaDEET perspective, the groups where teachers bring their learners as part of their school work are most successful. Currently I am the only educator at the Centre who can run the full programme. I therefore can only take an average of two week-long groups per month. In the remaining time I must attend to all other aspects of NaDEET's work.

Viktorija Keding

NEW RECYCLING ACTIVITY

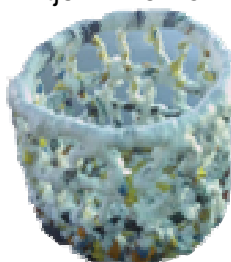
A growing environmental issue in Namibia is waste. There is little knowledge about different types of waste, how to correctly dispose of it and more importantly the '3 R's'- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. At the Centre, I focus on educating about the 3 Rs as I strongly believe that we should focus on reducing and reusing our waste products instead of always looking for more ways to dispose of waste. Until recently participants



Viktorija with a Namib Primary School learner

have been collecting old newspapers to make 'recycled fire bricks'. For a long time however, I have been wanting to address the plastic bag issue. Namibia does not have any legislation about plastic bags. They continue to be given out readily by stores and are just as readily discarded. In some places, they have unfortunately received the nickname of "Namibian flowers" as they 'decorate' the landscape.

Using suggestions from several teachers in the past year and the help of Antje Wilke from Namib Primary School, learners are now also engaged in a practical plastic bag 'recycling' activity. Learners are asked to collect old plastic bags. The bags are then cut into strips and plaited into rope. This plastic rope can then be coiled into a variety of different useful items. At the Centre we are currently busy making six small rubbish bins for the accommodation rooms out of the plastic rope.



Plastic bag waste paper bin

Viktorija Keding

The Golden Mole is produced by

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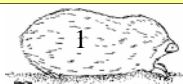
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Trust Certificate #: T168/ 2003

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

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL GROUPS IN 2005 (Term 1 and 2)

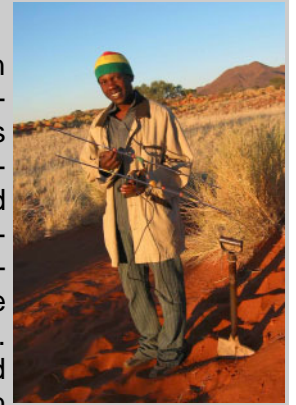
De Duine Secondary School– Environmental Club (grades 10-12)
Windhoek International School– Year 8
Usakos Children's Home– all ages
Deutsche Höhere Privat Schule– 2 groups of grade 6
Suiderlig High School UNESCO Associated Schools Programme
camp– 2 groups of grade 7-12
Namib Primary School– grade 6
Aranos Primary School– grade 6 and 7
Young Scientists– grade 7
Cambridge Primary School– grade 7



REPORTS FROM STUDENTS AND SCHOOLCHILDREN

MEET BORNFACE

I am a third year student at the Polytechnic of Namibia, pursuing a bachelors' degree in Nature Conservation. From my perspective, conservation entails a fundamental knowledge of the delicate relationships that exists between humans and other living things. As human beings we alienate ourselves from the concept of nature, but we are part of nature and everything that affects the environment inevitably affects us. We therefore need to be compatible with other living things on earth to ensure sustainable living. Conservation is perceived as being unconventional, but I believe by doing this, I am being responsible towards nature. This is why I chose a career in this field, because I believe nature conservation is not against the use of natural resources but advocates sustainable use. When I was young, I was taught to believe that natural resources belong to nobody and that nobody had the right to protect them. I thought we could use as much as we can and nature will take care of itself. But, along the way I realised that all along we were just taking and not putting back. Obviously if you only take and do not put back, you will have nothing left of whatever you are taking. This emanates to most of the social problems such as poverty and AIDS, which we are currently confronted with.



I decided to do my in-service at NaDEET because their primary objective is sustainable living. They educate the youth to live harmoniously with the environment without compromising their future ability to live on earth. This is aimed towards making life in the desert, which happens to be inhospitable, a practical thing. A solution if found, needs a concerted effort from everyone. A local saying from the Caprivi says, ``A chicken that refuses to lay an egg will soon find itself in a cooking pot``. Therefore we all have a role to play or else we might be digging our own grave. I therefore would like to leave you with the words of one great African woman who once said, "Mother Nature calls upon us to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own", (Wangari Mathaayi, Nobel laureate, 2004).

Bornface Simangolwa

'YOUNG SCIENTISTS' at NaDEET

In July a group of 30 'Young Scientists' came to NaDEET Centre. The 'Young Scientists' are grade 7 learners (ages 11-13 years) who have been selected by their teachers as talented in the science field. The learners of this group all were from Windhoek. Phillip, a learner from Suiderhof School, reports on his first day at NaDEET:

Phillip Likando

The environment here at NaDEET is extreme and hard to deal with but I don't really complain about that because I'm worried about the world, all because this place opened my eyes to realize how scarce resources are, especially in the desert. I now know how to save water and how much money and resources you can save by using solar energy.

I'm also impressed on how these people rely on the sun for all their energy. The way these people save water and talk about saving water influenced me to start saving water and talk about saving water to other people. I now realize that the environment needs water and depends on us indirectly for survival.

Learning more about the Golden Mole and radio tracking impressed me on how people are serious about Namibian animals and how they live. I get to learn abt and I'm really enjoying my stay + I'm never complaining that Windhoek is cold nor hot again!

FINAL REPORT...

I have spent the last six months at NaDEET doing my in-service training. I'm required to do a project, which I did on the insect biodiversity and population sizes here at NaDEET. I compared the two study areas: dune slope vs. sandy plain area. I based my study on two orders of insect Coreptera and Thasanura (only non-flying insects). I put old yoghurt containers in both study areas three times a week. The research was conducted for 24 hours at a time. According to my research it seems that the dune slope has higher insect biodiversity and population size compared to the sandy plain area. I think this is caused by food availability. On the strong windier days, 'sandy plain area' insects collected decreased while on the dune slope it was higher. I think this difference was caused by the less vegetation on the sandy plain compared to dunes slope where there is more vegetation. The landscape also plays a big role on the dunes as it prevents wind compared to the open sandy plain area. I increased my insect knowledge and I learned how to trap them. This research will help NaDEET with their insect identification. I also pinned insects for NaDEET in a display case.

Apart from my research, at NaDEET I lived in a sustainable way by using the "parabolic solar cooker" for cooking my food and with the participants. I took part in the Environmental Education activities at the NaDEET Centre. In all the activities I learned how to use the resources that we have in a sustainable way. More importantly I apply my theoretical knowledge in practical skills, because at NaDEET Centre most of the activities are practical. Therefore it was educative and nice to be at NaDEET. Thank you.

Uakendisa Muzuma



NEW WEATHER-PROOF ROOF

During the design and construction phase of NaDEET Centre in 2003 everyone said, "oh, it doesn't really rain in the Namib... it's a desert. Besides, if it does, it will only be very little"! Having lived in Namibia for almost seven years, I have learned never to complain about the rain. However, this year it rained not once, but twice while we had a group at the Centre. And, it rained so much that everyone was completely soaked with not a hint of sun to dry us out. Both times we were fortunate enough to sleep at the Die Duine Homestead as the Dürr Family was away at the time. It became very clear however that a long term plan needed to be made to provide appropriate cover from rain at NaDEET Centre.

In July this year the roof improvements were completed on the main building thanks to the financial support from the Namibia Nature Foundation-Namibian Environment Fund. Originally the main building was covered with two layers of shade cloth. A special UV protected yellow plastic sheet has been added underneath the top layer of shade cloth. Although it has now become somewhat nosier in the Centre on windy days, hopefully it will keep everyone nice and dry on the rainy days!

LEARNING ABOUT GOLDEN MOLE RESEARCH

In June/ July this year, Galen and Lynn Rathbun from the US conducted research on the Namib Golden Mole on Namib Rand Nature Reserve. They were based at the Die Duine Homestead where NaDEET's office is also located. Three of our school groups experienced a special treat as Galen spent two hours with each of them.



The schoolchildren had the opportunity to see the elusive Golden Mole and to discuss its behaviour and unique adaptations. Galen shared

his research objectives and technique with the learners. As he was trying to find out more about their movements, he had fixed tiny radio transmitters onto the Golden Mole's body. Galen devised a game for the learners to gain practical experience in radio telemetry using solar powered radio transmitters and his receiver set.



Lynn Rathbun is a professional artist who has allowed NaDEET to use the drawings she made of various insects, reptiles and plants. She also did the artwork for a Golden Mole maze for the learners' 'Sustainable Living Journals'.



Thank you very much Galen and Lynn for sharing your knowledge and work with NaDEET!

Can You Help in Kind?

Cleaned up your storeroom lately? Your "old junk" may be gold to us. NaDEET is looking for the following items.

- Cheese graters
- Large bowls
- Sharp kitchen knives
- Buckets
- Cooking utensils
- Ringed files
- Any workshop tools (hammer, screwdrivers, saw)



If you would like to donate any of these items or anything else you do not need, please e-mail (nadeet@iway.na) or phone us (063-693012) so we can arrange a pick up. Your help is greatly appreciated.

ADULT GROUPS

NaDEET Centre is also open to local adult groups. It should be an organized group of adults, for example from a church, choir, sport club or company. This year we have had two adult groups come to NaDEET for a weekend. In April we co-hosted a staff outing from the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) with Namib Rand Nature Reserve. At the end of July we hosted a group of 20 members of a church congregation from Windhoek. To improve awareness of and about NaDEET and to address our financial sustainability, we hope to have more Namibian adult groups in the future.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to Peter and Marilyn Bridgeford, Matt Berde and Hilda de Villiers for all of your help.

SUCCULENT KAROO EE PROJECT

In the last issue, this development phase project was reported on. Please check the next issue for an update.

E-mail Version of Golden Mole

If you have received a paper version of this newsletter and would like it e-mailed instead, please send us an e-mail with your e-mail address. Thank you! nadeet@iway.na

THE MOLE FILE

Fact No. 14: "Take a breath of fresh air...below the sand"

For a Golden Mole, there is plenty of air to breathe in the sand. The grain size of Namib Desert dune sand results in about 35% of the volume of dry sand being composed of air!



NaDEET thanks all of our supporters!

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