

Vol. 8, No. 1

# THE GOLDEN MOLE

NADEET's Endemic Newsletter



July 2010



Maltahöhe community member poses by solar-cooked cookies.

## Community Groups at NaDEET

From learning the scientific concepts behind climate change to actually constructing a fuel-efficient stove, adult participants in our new Community Education Programme are immersed in a curriculum that constantly blends theory with practice to present truly holistic environmental education. We believe that understanding fundamental ideas is the first step to environmental awareness, but having the values, skills and tools to take action is essential for lasting change. See pages 2-3 for a closer look at this year's pilot programme.

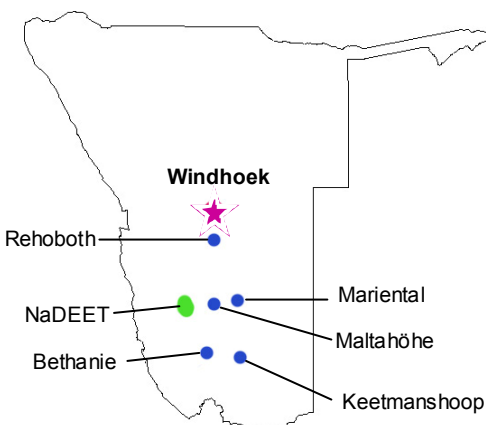
With the help of a grant from UNDP's "Global Environment Facility — Small Grants Programme" we were able to design our Community Education Programme entitled: "Mitigating Climate Change in Local Communities through Sustainable Living Education and Practices." It is a four-day intensive practical training course that focuses on improving household energy habits to help communities cope with environmental changes and improve their quality of life. The grant allowed five groups of participants from rural, impoverished communities to attend NaDEET Centre at no cost. In addition, each community group received 6 parabolic solar cookers. Thanks to a generous donation from our regular supporters the NamibRand Conservation Foundation, our closest community group—from Maltahöhe—received an additional four solar cookers!

We invited our participants from community-based organisations so that the existing support network will help them implement sustainable lifestyle changes upon returning home. The well-known organisation Women's Action for Development (WAD) helped us recruit participants from Keetmanshoop, Mariental and Rehoboth.

Maltahöhe participants came from several community-based organisations, including a soup kitchen. Lastly, the Bethanie community (to come in November) will be affiliated with the Bethanie Traditional Authority.

This programme has been very successful in its first year, but we need funding to continue to offer it to more local communities.

Elissa Brown



## NaDEET on TV!

ARTE

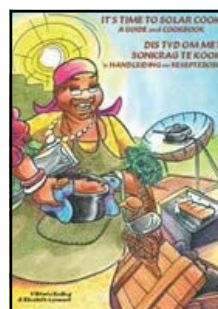
8 pm

11 August 2010

NaDEET will be featured on culture and travel channel ARTE in their popular programme: "Les nouveaux paradis" featuring Namibia.

**Remember to watch!**

## It's Time to Solar Cook



As a part of NaDEET's environmental literacy programme, we recently published another book in our "It's Time to..." series, entitled: *It's Time to Solar Cook*.

Written in both English and Afrikaans to reach a broader audience, this book features delectable recipes (from stewed meat to pot bread), all of which can be prepared in a parabolic solar cooker or solar oven. The book also includes information about the benefits of solar cooking, as well as details about purchasing solar cooking technology. Every Community Education Programme participant received their own copy and we hope it will enable them to continue applying the lessons learned at NaDEET!



# NaDEET's Community Education Programme

## Holistic Environmental Education

In the pilot year of our Community Education Programme, funded by the Global Environment Facility — Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP), we designed a project that would address environmental issues from all angles and lead to the immediate implementation of a more sustainable lifestyle. In our programme “**Mitigating Climate Change in Local Communities through Sustainable Living Education and Practices**,” theory meets with practice in every aspect of the course.

### Theory

Director Viktoria Keding teaches the workshop “Understanding Climate Change: Causes and Impacts.” Many participants have never heard about climate change, but in this class they learn about some of its worrying effects, as well as ways that humans can modify their lifestyle to mitigate it. This basic knowledge serves as a framework for the entire course and the sustainable lifestyle that NaDEET promotes. Participants also learn about the theory behind energy-efficient and alternative energy technologies. To illustrate the concepts, participants test the energy efficiency of household electrical appliances and different cooking techniques/technologies. These visual demonstrations are a memorable way to show that fuel-efficient stoves can boil 2-3 pots of water before an open fire even boils one!



This Rehoboth community member checks on her solar-cooked stew

### Practice

Ultimately, this programme is an intensive hands-on course intended for the community members to make significant changes to their lifestyle. They construct their own fuel-efficient stoves from recycled paint drums and wire—and learn how to cook on them. They gain practice sorting recyclables and using wastepaper to make recycled firebricks. They learn how to read a water meter and conduct audits of water, energy and waste. Of course, through solar-cooking all their meals, they are practically experts by the end of the course!

### Humans as a part of the environment

Above all, NaDEET teaches that humans are not separate from their environment; they are a *part* of it. Environmental issues are always intertwined with culture, politics and economics so it is impossible to address one part without the rest. Community participants learn ways to modify their habits to improve their own quality of life as well as their environment. Through small changes, they can save money, time, improve their family's health and minimise their “footprint” on the Earth.



Reading a water meter as a part of the daily audit



Reflecting sunlight with mirrors, like a parabolic solar cooker does!

## Why this programme, why now?

In the past seven years of offering environmental education for youth groups, we saw the need to develop a programme for adult community groups from disadvantaged regions of Namibia. There is a lack of awareness of alternative energy use and energy-efficient practices, and a general lack of understanding of the harmful environmental impacts of current practices such as the collection and use of firewood. Climate change is leading to severe environmental hardship and unpredictability and NaDEET teaches ways to adapt and mitigate it.

“Our community must stand up and take hands together for change.”

~ August Fredericks,  
Maltahöhe

Through education, we provide the tools to empowerment and improved quality of life. By targeting adult learners from rural, impoverished communities, we attempt to reduce social disparities and help create a more inclusive, equitable and environmentally-conscious Namibia.



## Sustainable Living Starts Here

### Bringing the changes home

Driving through the dirt streets of Maltahöhe, you'll find your eyes drawn to the large, metallic, space-age "satellite dishes" in several yards. The smell of stew and pap drifts through the air. In addition to enhanced awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills, we believe it is essential for the community participants to return home with sustainable living technologies—in this case, parabolic solar cookers. This leads to a greater sense of ownership and empowerment and a reduced dependency on costly and environmentally-damaging sources of energy. Each NaDEET participant receives a fuel-efficient stove (made by them!) and our publications *It's Time to Solar Cook* and *It's Time to Change* and a lucky individual wins the raffled-off solar oven. In this GEF-SGP project, every 2-3 participants received a parabolic solar cooker.

### What is still to come

In this year's pilot programme, we still have one more community group to come to NaDEET Centre from Bethanie. Next year, we will begin conducting follow-up evaluations with each of these five groups. We will visit each community to interview participants and observe to what extent NaDEET's lessons continue to be implemented. It is also an opportunity for participants to ask for sustainable living advice specific to their situation.

In the future, we would like to make the Community Education Programme a continued part of NaDEET's services. However, we are still in desperate need of funding. The community programme costs N\$250/participant/day (€25, US\$35). To provide participants with solar cookers costs an additional N\$1500/cooker (€150, US\$200). We seek donations and grants to be able to offer environmental education to rural impoverished communities, a sector of society that could definitively benefit.



Samuel Pfenning builds a solar oven with Maltahöhe community members

"If we change our ways, we have the power to break the circle of poverty."

~ Veronika Katjikuru,  
Maltahöhe



This 64-year-old NaDEET "graduate" can now solar cook for her seven grandchildren

### Reflections from the inside

*Our recent DED Weltwärts volunteer, Samuel Pfenning, helped develop the Community Education Programme and often served as the Centre Assistant. Here's what he has to say about his experience at NaDEET and with the Community Education Programme:*

One year in the desert, far away from my friends, far away from my beloved forest, far away from everything but NaDEET. It could have turned out horribly, but it didn't. There were two huge differences between the work and life at NaDEET and most of the work I did before in Germany.

First off, there is a commitment to the mission of NaDEET which is completely omnipresent. Work at NaDEET is not done just to do work and make a living. At NaDEET, we worked for nature and for the people coming to the Centre. Because of this, even times with extreme amounts of work were no problem at all.

The second great difference is the way I saw the results of my work instantly. Especially with the Community Education Programme participants at the centre, I received direct feedback about the preparation and execution of my effort. Also, it was astonishing to see the results of the actual environmental education. It is not like you are only planting a seed and hoping for it to grow one day—instead, you can actually see the participants talking about the lessons eagerly. You can see them implementing new techniques for using energy and water straight away.

To summarise: The most important thing I have learned at NaDEET is that work can be much more than just a way to feed one's family. Work can be an important and fun part of one's life. Thank you very much, NaDEET, for this lesson!

Samuel Pfenning

## Desert Adaptations as Teaching Tool for School Groups



The “Deadly Thorn” is not a thorn at all, but rather a small *animal*, extraordinarily adapted to desert life. Its orange-brown body lets it camouflage in the Namib dunes, and it can store water in its stomach for extensive stretches. Its single antenna glows at night to attract small insects, which it devours, and the “thorns” all over its body deter predators.

As you might have suspected, the “Deadly Thorn” doesn’t actually exist. It is the creation of a student from El Natan Private School who visited NaDEET Centre this June. Other students’ inventive—and sometimes frightening—inventions included the “Tongue Slitter” (which sucks up underground water with its multi-meter-long hollow tongue), the “Bush-tailed Hopper” (which hides in other animals’ burrows and camouflages its green horns in the grass) and the “Overgrown Seed” (a particularly pernicious tangle of roots that reaches deep underground water and poisons animals with its tufts above ground). These diagrams and drawings of unique flora and fauna were products of the “Super-Adapted Desert Creatures” activity in NaDEET’s weeklong environmental education programme for schoolchildren.

Throughout the week, the participants investigate desert adaptations: physical and behavioural ways that animals and plants “fit in with their surrounding environment.” Participants explore the rich biodiversity of the Namib Desert on their 3-hour dune walk, and they get an even closer look at species by setting out nocturnal traps. “Super-Adapted Desert Creatures” is a chance for students to have fun inventing their own creatures, each with their own unique adaptations to obtain food, water and shelter.



A student from Aranos P.S. shows off “The Overgrown Seed”

“[NaDEET] is life-changing. We need more learners to know about the environment, the things that damage it and how to limit these effects.”

- Teacher, Schlip P.S.

Well-adapted to millions of years of surviving under extreme conditions and limited resources (i.e. water!), the actual plants and animals of the Namib might be *the best* teachers of how to live efficiently and sustainably. Just like the desert creatures, Namibians must also adapt to their dry environment and finite natural resources. Participants get experience doing exactly that through water-saving bucket showers, using firebricks instead of firewood and solar cooking instead of burning fossil fuels for energy. Desert adaptations are a teaching tool for sustainable living, and desert ecosystems highlight the interconnected relations between all organisms and their environment. Biodiversity is one of NaDEET’s core programme emphases, along with energy, water and waste. NaDEET Centre’s holistic approach to the interwoven components of our environment is what makes us unique!

In addition to El Natan, NaDEET has hosted seven other primary school groups since the beginning of the Namibian school year, meaning that 234 wild and wacky new super-adapted desert creatures have entered this world! The other primary schools were Diaz P.S., Aranos P.S., Dr. Frans Aupa Indongo P.S., Schlip P.S., J.R. Camm P.S., Cambridge P.S. and the Waldorf School. Of these eight, six were returning schools, showing that teachers and students found their previous NaDEET experience valuable. We have also hosted two secondary schools: St. George’s High School and Lüderitz S.S. Of all the schools, only one was able to fully fund its trip to NaDEET and all the others received financial assistance. As a part of our open-door policy, we ask schools to pay what they can — or bring items of food to help cover costs. To continue providing our open-door service, we rely on our donors to help us. It costs N\$150/child/day at NaDEET (€15, US\$20). Please consider making a donation to help a Namibian schoolchild receive environmental education!



Setting pitfall traps overnight

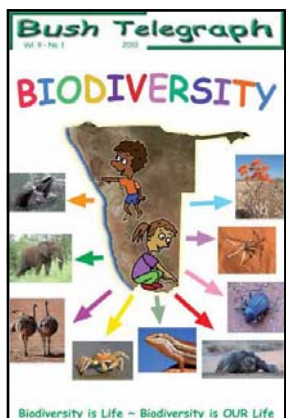
We also hosted four community groups from Mariental, Keetmanshoop, Maltahöhe and Rehoboth, and two other groups of adult visitors: Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society and a DED Weltwärts conference.



Elissa Brown

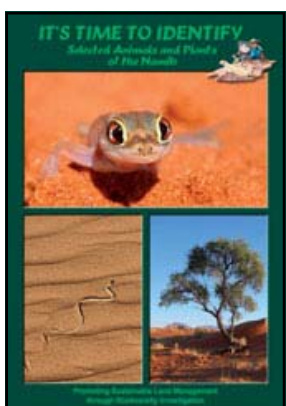


## NaDEET Celebrates the International Year of Biodiversity



To celebrate the diversity of life on Earth and to honour its importance, the United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. NaDEET has recently published two pieces of environmental literature to fit with the year's theme.

The first ***Bush Telegraph*** of 2010 casts a spotlight on biodiversity—in Namibia and all over the world. In an engaging and kid-friendly manner, it teaches readers about ecosystems, natural resources, threats to biodiversity and the importance of biodiversity in supporting all life. This issue (as well as the last two) aligns with its UNESCO sponsorship by highlighting the connections between biodiversity, the UN Millennium Development Goal of Environmental Stability, and the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. As we enter the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the *Bush Telegraph*, we are proud to report that our *Bush Telegraph* readership has surpassed 13,500 students, teachers and other interested Namibians.



As the most recent publication in our “It’s Time to...” series, ***It’s Time to Identify*** is a guide to some of the plants and animals found in the Namib Desert. Compiled over many months by Viktoria Keding, Sam Ehrenbold and many others, this informative booklet will be used at NaDEET Centre to help identify dune life and to learn more about desert adaptations. Every programme participant at NaDEET will receive their own copy of *It’s Time to Identify*. To promote national biodiversity efforts, we are printing 10,000 copies and also distributing copies to other environmental education programmes throughout Namibia. It is funded by the Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land Management.

To download these publications, visit our website at [www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html](http://www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html)



## Helmeringhausen: Spreading Solar Awareness at the Farmers’ Technology Day

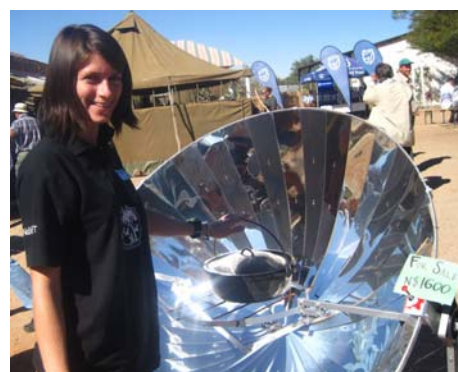
As the sun beat down upon Helmeringhausen—a small rural town in the Karas Region—NaDEET used its energy to cook enough butternut squash, cornbread, pot bread and rice salad for 200 people. We were invited to showcase our solar technology at the Helmeringhausen Farmers’ Association’s FarmTech Day this June, and we were responsible for preparing all the side dishes for that evening’s dinner.

In between boerewors rolls and Windhoek Lager, farmers visited our booth to learn about energy-efficient and solar cooking technology. We demonstrated how the equipment works and explained how it reduces energy costs and environmental impacts. Many of the farmers had never seen the equipment before and were excited about the possibility of harnessing the sun’s free and bountiful power. By the end of the day, we had sold all of our Vesto fuel-efficient stoves, parabolic solar cookers and solar ovens, and we had convinced nearly everybody of the potential of this technology for cooking scrumptious food!

Inspired by all the technologies at the fair, NaDEET purchased a urine-diverting dehydrating toilet to try out at the Centre. More water-saving than our current long-drop latrines, this toilet is able to dry out faeces odourlessly. We will install this new toilet near the Centre’s main building in the coming months and will report back! For more information on this technology, look at our *Bush Telegraph* Sanitation issue: [www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html](http://www.nadeet.org/educationalMaterial.html)



Andreas Keding explains how a solar oven works



Environmental Educator Karley Drumm rotates pot bread on the solar cooker

## NaDEET in the Media

NaDEET may be a small NGO in the middle of the vast Namib Desert, but we are beginning to show up on the map, thanks to recent media exposure.

What better way to introduce the media to NaDEET than to bring them to our Centre and give them first-hand experience in taking water-saving bucket showers or eating environmentally-friendly solar-cooked bread? In mid-July, 14 members of various print and broadcast Namibian press corporations (ranging from NBC TV to the Republikein newspaper) visited NaDEET Centre for our Media Day. Coinciding with the graduation of the Rehoboth Community Group from our four-day intensive programme, the Media Day was organised by Women's Action for Development (WAD). The Rehoboth community group was the last of the three groups that WAD helped NaDEET recruit (Mariental and Keetmanshoop were the others), and the Media Day was a way to celebrate WAD and NaDEET's collaboration while attracting larger publicity.



NaDEET and WAD staff at the Media Briefing

The media members nearly outnumbered the participants as they circulated the Centre, jotting down quotes and snapping photos right and left. They spent one night at NaDEET Centre to get a taste of the "model and experience" in sustainable living that NaDEET provides, and the next morning they toured the Centre and interviewed more community members. They enjoyed solar-cooked meals and tea and were impressed that everything was cooked with only the sun's power!



These proud Rehoboth WAD members pose in their NaDEET shirts with a solar cooker on their graduation day

After a rousing rendition of the Namibian and African Union anthems, the Media Briefing commenced. With NBC's cameras rolling, NaDEET Director Viktoria Keding and WAD Executive Director Veronica De Klerk addressed the audience. A former NaDEET programme participant and WAD member spoke about how she has applied NaDEET's lessons to her life in Mariental. The event concluded with presentation of certificates and hand-over of sustainable living technology.

*Elissa Brown*

"In these times in which we are living under the threat of climate change, these eye-opening programmes which NaDEET is running at this centre should not be an occasional 'by-chance experience' ..."

~ Veronica De Klerk, Women's Action for Development Executive Director

### THE MOLE FILE

#### Fact No. 4: "Tracking"



The golden mole usually travels by "sand swimming" underground, leaving a collapsed tunnel behind it. Its tracks, therefore, look like a very shallow gully in the sand. Don't be thrown off when they abruptly disappear and turn into little footprints—that just means that the golden mole has come to the surface and the tunnel tracks will resume before long!

### Polytechnic of Namibia Nature Conservation In-Service Training Students

NaDEET recently bid farewell to Ruusa Gottlieb, who completed her 6-month in-service training here at NaDEET. As well as serving as Centre Assistant for many groups, Ruusa conducted research on how to make the most effective firebrick. Her report can be found online at: [www.nadeet.org/studentInternships.html](http://www.nadeet.org/studentInternships.html)

Fellow Polytechnic student Daniel Shagama joined us in July, and he will be continuing and expanding Ruusa's firebrick research. Ultimately, the results will be featured in our upcoming publication: ***It's Time to be Efficient*** — a guidebook to sustainable living.





NADEET thanks  
our  
on-going  
donors and supporters



Our 1 March 2010 — 30 June 2010 donors were:

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Abiturjahrgang 2010 Bischöfliches Cusanus Gymnasium  
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Peter Fasching  
Uwe and Annette Fischer  
Andreas Kölsch

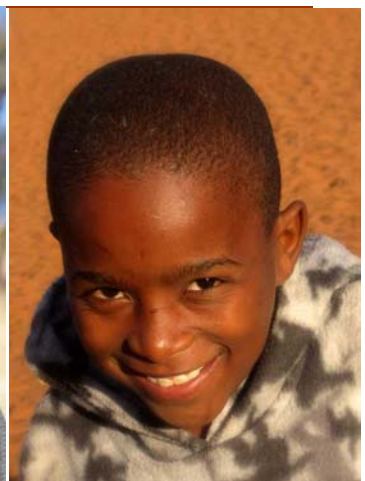
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Dirk Stroomann  
Wilhelm Family

A special thank you to:

Sarah Bittenbender, Monika Diehl and Bruno Panabieres of Marseille Namibie



# WE NEED YOUR HELP!



NaDEET depends on individual donations to fund our environmental education projects. Most Namibians 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. We are also in need of funding to renovate the Centre's houses to provide comfortable and safe accommodation for our visitors.

## Please help us with a donation today!

One child for one day N\$150 (€15, US\$20)  
One community member for one day N\$250 (€25, US\$35)

One child for one week N\$600 (€60, US\$80)  
New accommodation N\$35,000 (€3,500, US\$4700)

YES, I would like to support NaDEET!

**My donation:** \_\_\_\_\_ (amount)

Send us your contact details to receive our newsletter and to thank you!

**Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Your help is greatly appreciated!*

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

NaDEET  
Bank Windhoek  
Branch Code: 482 172  
Account No.: 3000659951  
SWIFT: BWLINANX

### or in Europe

NaDEET  
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NaDEET is a registered non-profit trust in Namibia.

Trust Certificate # T168/2003

## NaDEET Structure and Staff

### Board of Trustees:

Christiane Berker

Elinor Dürr

Uda Nakamhela

**Director:** Viktoria Keding

**Technical Director:** Andreas Keding

**Centre Manager/Environmental Educator:** Karley Drumm

**Sustainable Living Kitchen Manager:** Elizabeth Lammert

**DED "weltwärts" Volunteer:**

Samuel Pfenning (July 2009-July 2010)

**Polytechnic of Namibia Nature Conservation**

**In-Service Training Students:**

Ruusa Gottlieb (Jan-June 2010)

Daniel Shagama (July-October 2010)

