



## Introducing Uakendisa

I am Uakendisa Muzuma, a second year student at the Polytechnic of Namibia. I'm currently doing the Nature conservation course which is preparing me to understand the importance of nature and its living and non-living organisms and how they function in the ecosystem. The course provides me with the better understanding of how we should look after our limited resources in a sustainable way so that the next generations can utilise the resources in the same way.

What really provoked me to choose this course? People in my area used to practice illegal poaching, cutting down many trees, using poisons that killed many predators and other animals in the process. These actions affect my life too much because I use to ask myself questions like, "Do predators not have the right to exist?". After all this destruction of life there was a solution introduced by our government which is conservancies in communal areas whereby people have to look after their wild animals. At our place, called Otjokavare, and its surrounding area we agreed to this policy to look after our environment. We had started discussing and providing informal education to our people about the importance of the environment. We discuss this policy with our neighbours but it was difficult for them to understand. They said, "I will

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## The Succulent Karoo Ecosystem

In a previous issue of the Golden Mole, it was mentioned that NaDEET was potentially helping the Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme (SKEP), a Conservation International project, to develop an environmental education programme. For the first four months of this year, NaDEET is now engaged in the development phase of this project through a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF).



The Succulent Karoo is an ecosystem that is in the most Southwestern corner of Namibia and in the Northwestern part of South Africa. Why is this area so important? The Succulent Karoo is the world's only arid region recognised as a biodiversity hotspot. The biodiversity hotspot concept was started by a British ecologist out of the need to prioritise what part of our natural world should be protected with the little money available worldwide. Biodiversity Hotspots there-

fore are areas that have been identified by conservationists and grant-makers as priority areas for funding. A hotspot is defined as an area that meets the following two criteria:

1. High diversity of endemic species
  - a. Diversity is based on plant life as an indicator. An area must have at least 1,500 endemic plant species (0.5% of world's total). (Endemic species are animals and plants that only occur in one particular area of the world. For example, Grant's Golden Mole is endemic to the Namib Desert.)
2. Significantly impacted by humans
  - a. 70% of the original habitat must be disturbed and/ or altered

There are 25 designated biodiversity hotspots around the world. They contain 44 % of all plant species and 35 % of all terrestrial vertebrates in only 1.4% of the Earth's land area. The Succulent Karoo is also unique because it has the highest number of succulent flora on Earth. Succulent plants have thick, fleshy stems that can hold water easily.

Within Namibia the majority of the Succulent Karoo has been within the diamond mining restricted area although no diamond mining actually occurs there. This area is currently being re-zoned from a mining area to a protected area. The main human populations in the Succulent Karoo Buffer zone live in the coastal town of Lüderitz and in the small inland village of Aus.

NaDEET was approached to develop an environmental education programme for Lüderitz and Aus to help ensure the long-term conservation of the Succulent Karoo. One of the main threats of the area is a complete lack of awareness of this Biodiversity Hotspot. The reason that NaDEET was approached, although we are not physically in the Succulent Karoo area, is that there is no other environmental organisation in Namibia

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The *Golden Mole* is produced by

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Trust Certificate #: T168/ 2003



## Awareness and Fundraising Trip in USA

At the end of last year, I took my annual leave to the United States to visit my family and friends. Always having NaDEET on my mind and in my heart, I added on 2 weeks to try to raise awareness about our work and hopefully also some funds. Luckily I had a local fundraising coordinator, my mother. Several months before my visit she already arranged talks and meetings for me with relevant organisations and people. Only 24 hours after my arrival, I was already giving my first presentation to the Rotary Club of Greenwich, Connecticut. During the next two weeks I spoke to an audience at the Audubon Society (an American nature society), local German Club, Delta Kappa Gamma (an international women educator's society), Greenwich World Hunger and my parents' church. After my talks I sold some NaDEET cards and Namibia calendars in support of NaDEET. For most people that I met the first question was... where is Namibia? The second was... why do you live there? For most Americans, Namibia is an unknown country; however most were extremely interested to hear about the country, people and the work of NaDEET.

To increase environmental and cross-cultural awareness, I also gave presentations to groups of children at two different schools, Parkway School and Dundee International School. The after-school kids club at Parkway, "Kids with a Porpoise", decided to try to raise funds for NaDEET. The kids went home and did chores around the house for which their parents gave them pocket money. This money, a total of US\$350, the children then donated to NaDEET. Several of the other organizations are planning fundraisers for this year in support of NaDEET. Delta Kappa Gamma intends to raise funds to support Namibian women educators to attend the NaDEET Centre programme. Thank you so much to everyone who supported NaDEET and helped me during this trip. I also want to especially thank my parents for all of their efforts and dedication to NaDEET.

## NaDEET Office and Accommodation

Something that most people never think about is the administration of running a small non-governmental organisation. For the past two years, Tok Tokkie Trails has graciously given us space in an old converted storage room. Everyday when I was sitting behind my computer typing away at some fundraising proposal or new activity for the Centre, Hans from Tok Tokkie would pop his head in the door and say, "You like being in the office?" My answer was always a big...well, NO. Today, I can answer him differently. I prefer to be outside with the children at the Centre, but when I am in the office I enjoy it too. Why? Because we now actually have an office... and I have a view! (No worries, views make me work harder not less!)

So we are currently putting the finishing touches on the remodelling of the storage/ generator building at Die Duine to accommodate a larger office, kitchen and staff housing for NaDEET. And we also have space for short-term volunteers. This renovation will also provide a reception area for visitors of NaDEET. Although for the first two years, we managed to complete our objectives from a converted storage room, it was very difficult to host guests in that space. It was vital to expand to meet our needs and better be able to fulfil our aims and objectives. A special thank you goes out to Marc Dürr for supervising the building. So if you are in the area... please come by and have some tea with us on our new veranda.



### Learners @ NaDEET Centre

De Duine High School Environmental Club from Walvis Bay was our first group in 2005. They said, "The program also makes learners more self-confident and brings out their bright sides." For 2005 we already have 12 groups booked between now and July.

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not keep predators with my livestock" and we therefore divided the area according to the traditional leaders. Some areas did not start a conservancy right away. We gave our conservancy the name "Ehrirovipuka conservancy" which means "Place of wild animals" in the Otjherero language because there are a lot of animals. Our conservancy is doing well in Kaokoland. This has encouraged many people to stop illegal poaching, to use trees for building in a more wiser way and to report any illegal practices. People's values towards the environment have changed in a positive way.



Environmental education is a better solution to all these problems as indicated here: "If we want tomorrow's politicians and adults to care about environmental issues, values must be awarded a place in the teaching of environmental studies. We cannot establish priorities or goals before we have determined which values are important to us" (from Environmental Education booklet by the Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation). My people's attitudes towards the environment has encouraged me so much so that I wanted to take this course to provide more service where it's needed to my community and the rest of the Namibian people. Let us look after our environment.



## You Too Can Make a Difference!



Meet Minelli, Christina and Frans and Hans...

They work as menial workers at Tok Tokkie Trails – a tourism organisation. Between them, they earn approximately N\$ 1500-00 (US\$ 300-00, E260-00) per month. Not a lot of spare cash is it? However, their donation to NaDEET adds up to N\$ 16800-00 per year. Their donation is not in cash, but in kind. Because they are prepared to give up their days off to help at the Centre, NaDEET does not have to employ a full time maintenance person nor a cleaner. They help with getting the Centre ready for a school group. They help with maintenance jobs – oops the pipe has just broken, Frans, please help. Oops, the food truck forgot to deliver our bread, Minelli, please make some bread. Christina, please help with the cleaning – the children are waiting for the next edition of the Bush Telegraph – if I have to clean, I cannot write the Bush Telegraph.



NaDEET survives on a shoe string budget. Every donor organisation rather sponsors projects that have more “media appeal” – poor children living in abject poverty getting their daily ration of food, or the plight of an endangered mammal – good for photos, or very SPECIFIC awareness programmes – eg HIV/AIDS. At NaDEET, we believe (perhaps idealistically) that by educating and LIVING sustainably and respecting the environment, we naturally work towards alleviating these specific problems. Donors also like funding projects where it can be shown that after 5 years the project will be self sustainable – for example income generating projects – previously unemployed people learning a skill such as bread or doll making.



NaDEET can NEVER be self sustainable – school children will never be able to fund a visit themselves to the Centre. So we have a choice – compromise our principals to make the project more financially sustainable through income generating activities, such as tourism, or we rely on each and every one of you.



Even with the improved exchange rate, E30-00 (~N\$ 160-00) can mean the difference for a make or break of the NaDEET project. Even if you cannot financially part with that, perhaps you know three people who could each part with E10-00. Spending the time making those three phone calls or visits CAN make the difference.

*Elinor Dürr*

### 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.

- Thermos flasks
- Cutlery (Knives, Spoons, Forks)
- Sharp kitchen knives (Bread knife)
- Cooking utensils
- Stapler + staples
- Ringed files
- Ink for our fax machine (Panasonic KX FP 85)
- Black pots
- Low energy fridge/ freezer
- Any workshop tools (hammer, screwdriver, drill, metal saw)



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

### Going Paperless

NaDEET is slowly catching up with the rest of the technologically advanced world. We would like to e-mail this newsletter to all how have access. If you have received a paper version and would like it e-mailed instead, please send us an e-mail with your e-mail address. Thank you!

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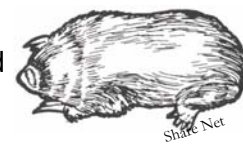
equipped with the resources in terms of personal knowledge and experience. Conservation International recognised the fact that Viktoria, within the NaDEET organisation, has the skills and experience to ensure the successful development of this project. NaDEET has the resources and knowledge base to complement a programme in the Succulent Karoo and looks forward to expanding its horizons by being more geographically prevalent in Namibia. This project can only lead to further opportunities to broaden NaDEET's reputation.

*Elinor Dürr and Viktoria Keding*

### THE MOLE FILE

#### Fact No. 7 “Energy or Safety”

It takes more energy for the Golden Mole to swim through the sand than to run on the dune surface. However on the surface it is vulnerable to predators like the owl. The Golden Mole must balance out the dangers of being eaten vs. the precious need to save energy.





# NADEET thanks all of our supporters!

## INDIVIDUALS (in alphabetical order)

Pierre and Yvonne Anger  
Dorothea Bagheri  
Heilwig Barker  
Erika Benz  
Jean-Marc and Brigitte Beuriot  
Pat Bonser  
Chris Broughton  
Andreas and Mandy Brückner  
Jennifer Cohen  
Isanne van Dedem  
Dieter and Marianne Djuchem  
Heinz and Ursel Düser  
Marie and Andre Exler  
Miek Wackie Eysten  
Mr and Mrs Facon  
Uwe and Annette Fischer  
German Evangelical Lutheran Church Choir  
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Peter Graef and Daniela Amrein  
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Horst and Birgitte Kemmling  
Kathie and Bill Kiernan  
Sasha Kirkpatrick  
Jutta and Henning Knobloch  
Trudi Larsh  
Dieter and Susi Leis  
Hans and Uli Leis  
Kirsti and Raimo Lintonen  
Peter Lochner  
Inge Lorenz  
Ekkehard and Dorothee Lux  
Elisabeth McLaughlin  
Chantal Massing  
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Horst Schmidt  
Jürgen and Heide Schreiber  
De Sorese  
Wally Spaeh  
Hans and Erika Staby  
Els den Tex de Leeuw  
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Francoise Tomas  
Eric Tournaire  
Hans and Regina Trapp  
Briony Turner  
Brigitte vedry  
Katharina Weber  
Claudia and Stephan Wiegand  
Harry and Betty Woodman

## ORGANISATIONS (in alphabetical order)

CC Africa  
deSTEEN  
Electro Repairs  
First National Bank  
Hauser Excursion

John Meinert Printing  
NamibRand Conservation Foundation  
Radio Electronic  
Safaris Unlimited  
Sossussvlei Mountain Lodge

Southern Cross Services (Alnet)  
Sparkasse Rosenheim  
UNESCO Community Association-Paris  
Valco Pipes Co.



## A special thank you to:

Christiane and Marianne Berker  
Jürgen and Dorothe Klein  
NamibRand Nature Reserve

Bruno and Isabelle Panabieres  
Wulf and Renate Paulick  
Caia Petersen

Bernard Pinon  
Suzanne van Vliet  
Bernard and Mayda de Winter

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**NB:** Please post this form with your donation or copy of bank deposit to:  
**NADEET, P.O. Box 31017, Pioneers Park, Windhoek, Namibia**

Sponsors will receive our newsletter, which includes updates on current programme activities and visiting groups.

***Thank you very much! Your help is greatly appreciated!***

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