A Bustle of Activity at NaDEET Centre

Twelve Namibian school and youth groups have visited NaDEET Centre since March this year. All the groups, except for three, were from our regular schools including St. George’s College, Deutsche Höhere Private School, Daweb Junior Secondary School, Dr. Frans Indongo Primary School, Cambridge Primary School and the Windhoek After-School Centre.

We had three new school and youth groups that participated in the NaDEET Centre programme. The first was a youth group from Karasburg in the far South of Namibia— the Karasburg Clean-up Club. The Clean-up Club is an initiative from a Peace Corps volunteer to encourage action for a clean environment amongst high school learners in Karasburg.

The second new group was also organized by a Peace Corps volunteer working in a school in Bethanie (240 km South of NaDEET). She brought 40 learners from her grade nine classes. The learners had such a wonderful time that they have inspired the grade 10 life science teacher to also arrange a trip to NaDEET for his grade. They will be coming to NaDEET in September.

Our last new visitors to NaDEET are from a small farm school North-east of the Naukluft Mountains, Witkrans Primary School. The school principal, teacher and secretary together with all thirty of the school’s learners came to NaDEET in July.

We also hosted a church youth group from Darmstadt, Germany, in August. The group came to Namibia for approximately three weeks primarily to spend two weeks volunteering on a farm near Windhoek and at a primary school. The youth then spent five days at NaDEET. Their programme included many of our regular activities. The dune walk was extended to a full day walk through the desert, and specifi-
On behalf of NaDEET, I gave a presentation entitled “Sustainable Living and Learning at NaDEET Centre-Namib Desert, Namibia”. My presentation reviewed our original design objectives and reflected on if and how we have managed to achieve them. In 2003 I gave a presentation at the EEASA conference held in Windhoek, Namibia, that addressed what we wanted to do at NaDEET and very importantly—why. This presentation at WEEC was a wonderful opportunity for me to document NaDEET’s successes and its weaknesses since the 2003 conference. It also gave me an opportunity to share these ideas with other environmental education practitioners who have been or may be trying to initiate similar ideas. Below is an abstract from my presentation. In addition both the WEEC 2007 and the EEASA 2003 papers will soon be available on our website www.nadeet.org.

The Congress incorporated three full days of presentations as well as many opportunities to network and meet colleagues, especially at a party in a local aquarium and gala dinner to celebrate EEASA’s 25th birthday. Over 1000 delegates from more than 100 countries worldwide took part in this Congress. The next WEEC will take place in 2009 in Montreal and the next EEASA conference will be in Swaziland in 2008.

**Abstract from WEEC paper presentation by Viktoria Keding**

**NaDEET Centre improvements and future goals**

Throughout the past four years NaDEET Centre has continuously grown and improved itself, however, the original rationale and objectives have proven effective and appropriate. There are a few areas that NaDEET Centre would like to address in order to further its environmental learning opportunities. NaDEET Centre aims to actively include climate change education into the classroom (micro-level content). This new environmental ‘buzz word’ is already actively addressed through the environmentally friendly facilities at NaDEET Centre (macro-level content). Almost no fossil fuels are used before, during or after the NaDEET Centre programme except for our vehicle. However as Namibia continues to develop, its contribution to global warming and climate change also increases, which is often overlooked in light of temporary decreased poverty. Secondly, NaDEET Centre currently does not actively recycle its wastewater as grey water from the kitchen and showers goes into the sand. This water does benefit the local vegetation however it is being underutilised as an effective learning opportunity. After thorough research of different options, NaDEET Centre plans to build a small-scale solar distillation facility to recycle primarily wastewater from the kitchen. On average this is about 400 litres per group or 10 000 litres per annum. This water will be tested for its purity however current plans are to use it for a small-scale herb and vegetable garden. Lastly to improve upon NaDEET Centre’s impact in the learners’ homes and communities the design of the At-School-Programme needs to be re-evaluated. As funding remains difficult to secure, a more cost-efficient yet effective programme must be designed. This is currently in the beginning stages.

**Conclusion**

After four years and approximately 2000 learners, NaDEET Centre has proven to be an appropriate and effective environmental education centre. As a product of a programme evaluation conducted in 2002 of the Africat EE Centre, NaDEET has capitalised on the lessons-learned and first-hand experiences. The response of participants to the sustainable living activities and Centre facilities has been tremendously positive. Learners continuously remark in their evaluations that their favourite activity is solar cooking and that they found the water monitoring valuable. At a time when funding for non-profit work, especially environmental education, is increasingly scarce, it is vital that all environmental education centres monitor themselves and look to maximise the learning opportunities they provide participants. NaDEET Centre is therefore also a model for how other environmental education centres in Namibia could be improved to maximise their impact. Most importantly EE Centre facilities and ‘free time’ learning must support the ‘planned’ learning programme, for the centre to achieve its main educational objectives. NaDEET believes that this design philosophy will improve attitudes and promote change in participants’ daily lives.
Fact No. 13: “A Lifetime in the Dunes”
The Namib Golden Mole spends its entire life in the sands of the Namib Desert. Its scientific name is *Eremitalpa granti namibensis*. The name *Eremitalpa* means ‘sand mole’.

The Namibian Moth File

One of NamDEET’s primary goals from its inception has been to provide an environmental education opportunity for schools in the South of Namibia. Unfortunately residents of the South continue to be marginalized due to a variety of reasons including the lengthy physical distances between community centres, information development, and opportunity costs to reach local citizens. The local lodges on NamibRand Nature Reserve have shown commitment to help NamDEET accomplish this goal. Several schools have been given the opportunity to participate in the NamDEET Centre programme, due to financial assistance from Sossusvlei Mountain Lodge’s Ostrich Egg Project. The lodge is one of NamDEET’s neighbours on NamibRand Nature Reserve and has been raising funds from their guests through the sale of ostrich eggs. This project has benefited a local school in Maltahöhe, Daweb JSS, who has made NamDEET an annual outing for its life science classes for the past three years. A primary school from Rehoboth has also brought its grade 7 class to the North of Namibia. Unfortunately the transport costs to travel to the NamibRand Nature Reserve are often too high for schools from this area. We hope to continue to find ways to finance transport costs for local schools.

The Bush Telegraph is a mini-magazine for Namibian youth. It aims to increase knowledge of and improve attitudes towards our environment through reading. We are still continuing to look for funding for a Bush Telegraph issue on Wilderness Areas in Namibia. This topic was developed in a short workshop at the Game Rangers Association AGM in 2006.

WOLWEDANS FOUNDATION

Wolwedans, another of NaDEET’s neighbours lodges, has recently assisted Cambridge Primary School. Having visited NaDEET Centre, Sossusvlei Nature Reserve, and accommodation costs for the transport, programme and accommodation costs for their guests through the sale of ostrich eggs. This project has benefited a local school in Maltahöhe, Daweb JSS, who has made NaDEET an annual outing for its life science classes for the past three years. A primary school from Rehoboth has also brought its grade 7 class to the North of Namibia. Unfortunately the transport costs to travel to the NamibRand Nature Reserve are often too high for schools from this area. We hope to continue to find ways to finance transport costs for local schools.

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In order to conserve paper, time and money, we are no longer using envelopes for our newsletters. If you
would like to receive an emailed version instead please contact us. Thank you!

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