Sharing NaDEET Work: Locally and Abroad

Given the opportunity and the resources, we share our environmental education activities and approaches as much as we can. NaDEET’s Director was recently invited to participate in the UNESCO Experts Meeting on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Africa in March. Two months later, four NaDEET staff members attended the nationally important Namibia Environmental Education Network (NEEN) conference at the Waterberg Plateau in May.

UNESCO Experts Meeting on Climate Change Education

The three day meeting was held on the island of Mauritius as it is one of four countries worldwide that is currently implementing a pilot climate change education programme with UNESCO. Acutely aware of the impacts of climate change, this island nation was an appropriate host for this Africa-wide meeting. Climate change education is on the agenda of most countries and many are trying to incorporate it into existing environmental education activities. The meeting concluded with recommendations for further Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) practices related to climate change education.

Invited participant, Viktoria Keding presented a short talk under the theme “Building green societies through green job training” and focused on our collaboration with UNESCO on a publication in progress It’s Time to Work. This new publication is a guide to careers in the technical and vocational sector to highlight jobs that are specifically focused on the environment and those that may not traditionally seem “green” but actually are key to sustainable development. One such example is the electrical sector as technicians need to have the skills in developing and maintaining renewable energy and energy efficient systems. These conferences always give an opportunity to reflect on our own practices and the actual environmental impact of meetings and conferences world-wide. It becomes evident that there is still an enormous gap between policy and practice, what we ask others to do and what we do ourselves. The sharing of ideas is crucial, however, the manner in which we do it is key. “I would like to stress the need for us to reflect and focus – at the end of this conference – on the quality of what we do, not merely the quantity.” This theme continued to be raised at the NEEN conference in Namibia.

Viktoria Keding

NEEN Annual Conference

“We are already doing it... it’s been tried before without success... it’s not practical or it is too risky. Often these comments are made and as a result nothing is done about environmental problems.”

These remarks made by keynote speaker Dr Daniel Babikwa a professor from Makerere University, Uganda, spurred on conference participants to reflect on their own environmental education work. If we are doing it, are we doing enough? Should we try again and see if we will be successful this time? Attended by over a 100 delegates from different government ministries and non-governmental organisations, the conference brought together environmental education practitioners from different walks of life. It was a positive and encouraging sign to have many young people and students at the conference ready to act. NaDEET was well represented with two presentations, one interactive decision making game ‘What will you decide?’ by Vilho Absalom and a review on how EE is being transferred into communities in southern Namibia through our Community Education programme for adults by Viktoria Endjala. We also had the opportunity to share our environmental literacy resources such as the new Its Time to Grow booklet pack. NaDEET has increased its commitment to NEEN as Viktoria Endjala is now the Hardap Regional Representative.

Viktoria Endjala

Absalom Vilho and Jule Piloht presenting at NEEN
As the action title indicates, this project aims to improve the living standards and thereby the environment of Namibians, especially in the South through environmental education. For the past three years NaDEET has significantly expanded its reach to Namibian communities with a 50% increase in the number of groups hosted per year at NaDEET Centre thanks to this financial support. With the project nearing completion, it is time to reflect on the activities and the results achieved. NaDEET is in the process of an external evaluation to improve objectivity and critical reflection on our work and choice of activities. These will be shared in upcoming newsletters. Below are the reports of our latest activities to complete this multi-faceted project:

**100% School Attendance @ NaDEET Centre Nears Completion**

*Splash, thump, rattle, rattle, splash* - was the sound of the NaDEET bakkie departing the NamibRand Nature Reserve back in early 2011, driving through heavy rain, on a gravel road, with the very heavy Energy Demo Trailer rented from another NGO in tow. Early in 2011, NaDEET staff members embarked on a journey to find and invite all the schools in the Hardap Region that still had not yet attended NaDEET’s programme through one of several outreach trips. By the end of the three year project and coinciding with our 10th anniversary, we wanted to ensure that every school had at least once had the opportunity to experience NaDEET Centre environmental education programmes first hand. At the beginning of the project this was about half of the approximately 50 schools in the region.

All schools were more than enthusiastic and eager to come and finally experience NaDEET. “I have heard so much about NaDEET and finally I am here with my own eyes to see what people are talking about” says a local teacher. The EU project has not only made more schools aware of NaDEET and given them the opportunity to attend but has touched the lives of over 1000 participants. Both primary and secondary learners most of whom have never been outside the town they were born and raised in have experienced something completely new, different and life changing - a sustainable lifestyle. “I’m amazed at the learners and those who have opened up. Their confidence shines here” remarks Mrs. Cloete from Ruimte Primary School. Ruimte is one of the many school groups who have taken the initiative to make NaDEET an annual part of their school calendar after the initial visit fulfilling our ultimate aim of making environmental education an on-going means to protect the environment. Through this project, bridges have been built to increase awareness and new relationships with schools in our region have been fostered.

Happy to show their appreciation and applying their newly learned skills, learners sewed a 100% “reused and recycled” EU banner during their break.

**Improving access**

Valuable financial resources for this project were re-allocated to increased community work and sustainable living equipment ownership thanks to transport support given by the local Ministry of Education. More than two-thirds of the groups that came to NaDEET with this project from 2011-2013 arrived in a government sponsored vehicle. To ensure that this improved access remains, we depend on the Ministry of Education to continue to support their schools in this way.

*Karley Drumm*

**Community Education Continues...**

The joy community members demonstrate when voucher results are announced is priceless; at least to those that passed and earned themselves solar cookers. And this year every community participant who attended the programme was cheering and dancing as all 45 of them were going home as solar cooker owners. Cooking on fire has never been pleasant, high electricity bills are not welcome. Solar cookers can be an ideal answer. Thanks to the EU funded action NaDEET has been able to invite a total of six communities over three years to participate in our community education programme. The feedback this year from the Aranos and Rietoog communities was very rewarding.

To increase impact and maximise the resources available through the grant, we piloted a community education outreach. Three NaDEET staff members organised a week-long training workshop to Rehoboth. The aim was to raise awareness as well as increase ownership of alternative energy equipment in the Hardap Region. The workshops were well attended with over 100 participants. The enthusiasm and willingness to learn seen in community members encourages us to seek further funding for more outreach work.

*Viktoria Endjala*
European Union (EU) funded three year action
Environmental Education to Empower Namibian Communities to Improve their Living Conditions

Bush Telegraph Magazine and NamPost Celebrate Environmental Education

Once again the title of our new issue of the Bush Telegraph, Environmental Education: The Foundation of Sustainable Development, holds true. In honour of the importance of environmental education to achieve a sustainable Namibia, NamPost issued a souvenir sheet stamp. “NaDEET celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The single-stamp souvenir sheet, released today, is a fitting tribute to NaDEET as well as a call to action for sustainable living.”-NamPost - 20 June 2013

This issue of the Bush Telegraph reviews a short timeline of EE policy and actions. It highlights how environmental education takes place in and outside a structured classroom, including in our daily lives. It tests readers awareness, knowledge, skills and attitude about the environment and their own behaviour - take the attitude test featured here. An interview with NaDEET’s Director Viktoria Keding and a page dedicated to NaDEET Centre celebrate its tenth anniversary. As part of the celebrations, one of our lucky readers has a chance to walk away with a NaDEET 10 year buff by taking part in the contest. Access the Bush Telegraph at: http://www.nadeet.org/educational-material.

Did you know? The Bush Telegraph has a print-run of 18,000 copies and is directly sent to a readership of over 16,000 Namibians. It takes one person almost one week to fold, stuff, seal, stamp, label and bundle all the envelopes for mailing.

Student Interns

Interning at an organisation is an excellent opportunity to get hands-on experience in the working world. At NaDEET, most of our interns work as Centre Assistants which is a key component of the NaDEET Centre programme. Of course, they also assist in anything and everything else that needs to get done. Below Sem Shilongo, third year student at the Polytechnic of Namibia’s Nature Conservation department shares his experience and research project conducted at NaDEET from January-June 2013.

We also welcome our newest intern and sixth sponsored by this EU funded action, Martha Sam. Martha recently completed her undergraduate work in Environmental Biology at the University of Namibia. Her first week at NaDEET was spent in our Bush Telegraph “distribution centre”.

An Opportunity of a Lifetime

I had an understanding that deserts support very little organisms due to the harsh environment in which they live but this totally changed after doing my internship at NaDEET. I had no specific reason for applying here, I just wanted to be far from cities and experience a new environment somewhere. The past six months have changed me; I can say I’m a different person now. There is so much to learn here. Due to its remoteness, at NaDEET one can enjoy the peace of nature with limited human activities. I have observed that the desert is a complete system which supports a variety of organisms of which most of them have special abilities that enable them to survive in this type of environment. It was very easy for me to adapt to my environment. During my internship I conducted a project to improve my research skills. Due to the record number of high rainfall years since NaDEET’s opening, I looked at the relative and current habitat preference of a particular grass species in the NaDEET area on the NamibRand Nature Reserve. Ironically during this rainy season, NaDEET received only a few drops that can hardly be counted…

The most amazing thing I have learned here is how to use alternative sources of energy. Back home in the northern part of Namibia, we depend on wood as a main source of fuel, but now I have learned that one can use solar cookers and ovens which only need sunlight to cook with. My time at NaDEET also helped me meet different people from different backgrounds through at the programmes at NaDEET Centre. It was an eye opener to work with adult groups as I also learned from them the desire to want to own a solar cooker to cut their dependence on electricity and/or gas as it becomes more expensive. NaDEET is doing a great job especially by educating the young generation so that they grow up with the awareness of environmental issues and relate this to what their actions have on the environment. I wish people from my home village would also get an opportunity so that they learn and change their way of living.

Sem Shilongo
In this year’s newsletters we share with you achievements and stories from the past ten years with contributions from those involved. Enjoy!

**The Beginnings by Elinor Dürr, Co-founder and Trustee:**
No company, organisation or NGO is an entity on its own. It exists only because of dedicated staff and many hours of hard work. On my wall as a child was a poster of a horse and a quotation that read as follows:

*You are never given a dream without being given the power to make it come true.*

*You may have to work for it, however……*

Our dream was to create a better future by educating our youth in sustainable living. It was also important to us to be able to share the most beautiful, magical landscape with the Namibians of tomorrow, thus ensuring their commitment to its preservation. In short, we wanted an environmental education centre to run parallel with our company at the time Tok Tokkie Trails (TTT). Marc and I had this dream but at the same time we needed to make a sustainable living (excuse the pun). We achieved the sustainable living with TTT but we had neither the time nor the finances to implement our dream, although we both wanted that dream to come true. We did however, work for our dream. Luckily we didn’t have to work very hard. We found Viktoria and Andreas. They both shared our passion for the outdoors and our vision of an environmental education centre. Once Viktoria and Andreas were on board, our work was done. Marc still put in many hours for NaDEET in terms of building and assisting in the maintenance etc. I could sit back and watch how the pupa of our dream turned into a biggest and most beautiful butterfly I could ever have imagined.

**Growing up with our participants by Viktoria Keding, Co-founder and Director:**
I have always believed that keeping our Centre’s programmes relevant and addressing the needs of our participants to be the cornerstone to our success. From the beginning we have learned from the desert and applied it to our sustainable living programme.

One of our first grade 7 primary school participants in 2003 was a schoolgirl from the remote village of Aminus named Lucretia Bitz. At the time I was on my own as the Centre’s educator, kitchen manager and centre assistant (today we have three staff members doing this work). As I was also new to the Namib, I learned with the children on every dune walk.

Ten years later, I had the opportunity to teach Lucretia again. This time as a grown woman studying household management at the Agricultural Training Centre Krumhuk with whom she returned to NaDEET Centre. It was rewarding to see Lucretia completed her schooling and being part of a select group of students at an institution focused on sustainability as if her NaDEET experience in 2003 had guided her way. This time when I taught Lucretia and her fellow students, we examined climate change and looked at how to improve household energy practices. Upon completion of the community programme, Lucretia has now returned home with her own parabolic solar cooker similar to the one she had used for the first time ten years earlier. This recent experience made me think of how Lucretia experienced NaDEET then compared to now:

**My Top 5 List of what is essentially still the same but only gotten better…**

5) a programme using the Namibian school curriculum as a guideline to today a programme fully linked with national policies
4) a participation rate of only four groups to today more than 35 per year
3) a Centre staff to learner ratio of 1:40 to today 1:13
2) realise after years of trying out different methods that recycled firebricks are truly made best with only hands.
1) an environmental audit only measuring water use to a full audit of water, energy and waste
...and of course we still practice what we teach!
Dedicated staff by Elinor Dürr, Co-founder and Trustee:
The groundwork was all laid, it now just needed implementation and here is where Viktoria absolutely came into her own. Watching Viktoria teach gives one the same feeling as when one listens to beautiful music or looks at art. It is art in motion. I’ve sat in on a few classroom activities. Viktoria will have on the board “the water cycle” and while the aim of the lesson might be to teach the water cycle, she’s also taught the schoolchildren some maths, some physics and of course English and geography. The “Ah ha” moments that the children experience seem to be as often whether they come from the elite private schools or whether they come from a community school in the deep south. Viktoria manages to speak with the children, rather than at them and manages to speak an English that they understand without compromising or destroying the English language. This is a talent that cannot be taught, it is a gift. It can perhaps be embraced by other educators and perhaps our other educators at NaDEET will be inspired by Viktoria’s way of teaching and realize that within them is also this same talent. 

So ten years on, Viktoria spends less time in the classroom, and more time on the administrative issues. NaDEET is blessed with a director who is as good an administrator as she is an educator, so she finds herself leaving the educating in the capable hands of staff she has hand picked to ensure the continuance of the quality at the centre, while she can concentrate more on the most important job in the world – being a mother – and she does this job not only with her children, but also with her “third”, or rather “first” child – NaDEET. Viktoria, as a trustee and a dreamer I salute you, and thank you for making Marc and my dream into a reality. We were both privileged to experience the reality on numerous occasions together and I know that the path NaDEET is following makes Marc as proud as it makes me. I am honoured to say I am a trustee albeit in name only. So, NaDEET, happy birthday, and may the next ten years be as fruitful and successful as the first ten.

Finding my passion by Viktoria Endjala, Intern ’09 & ’12 and now Educator:

I always wanted to protect the environment and studying Natural Resource Management was the first step to reaching that goal. However, I did not quite figure out how, until my in-service training at NaDEET. There I learned that there are different ways of protecting the environment, and one that motivated me most was through creating awareness among other people, there and then I found my ticket to doing something that I really love. Being at NaDEET now again and doing exactly that gives me great pleasure knowing that I am contributing to something bigger.

It is the hard work and dedication of our staff that enables NaDEET to provide quality environmental education to thousands of Namibians over the past ten years. NaDEET has always operated with a small staff - even with as few as only two. Today we have 10 full-time staff members of which almost half originally were interns who returned as employed staff. NaDEET is fortunate that most staff, be it a short term volunteer or the director, are motivated by the organisation’s vision to improve the quality of life of Namibians and protect the environment to give beyond a “normal day’s work”. This is evidenced again and again when staff fix a maintenance problem on a Sunday afternoon that there is water for the Centre for the school children arriving the next day or office based staff send late nights writing newsletters to share our work.

NaDEET is only where it is today with the effort and dedication of many. Thank you to:

Alex Alsbach  ~ Mari Alweeno  ~ Daniela Amrein  ~ Jeremia Amutenya  ~ Lukas Arbrenz  ~ Tobias Becker  ~ Leon Benade  ~ Matt Berde  ~ Sarah Bittenbender  
Sterling Bittenbender  ~ Standly Brand  ~ Manon Briner  ~ Elissa Brown  ~ Ben Burghart  ~ Chris Cargill  ~ Hilda de Villiers  ~ Branan Edgens  
Samuel Ehrenbold  ~ Agnes Eiseg  ~ Kores Gaoseb  ~ Eric Gariseb  ~ Charlton Goliath  ~ Ruisa Gottlieb  ~ Peter Graef  ~ Susan Gregory  ~ Christina Hanse  
Johannes Hausiku  ~ Nick Heinke  ~ Daniel Inekia Shagama  ~ Manekye Kauandenge  ~ Sonke Keding  ~ Michel Keding  ~ Eitsa Kiekebusch-Steinitz  
Dorothe Klein  ~ Andreas Kolsch  ~ Beate Lauden  ~ Jon and Haven Leavitt  ~ Kolja Lichtenthaler  ~ Patience Mamili  ~ Jon Maravelas  ~ Naie Marengo  
Christi Meyer  ~ Christian Mott  ~ Sascha Mothus  ~ Calum Murray  ~ Uckendsa Muzuma  ~ Nikolaas Nairb  ~ Thomas Neema  ~ Anne Maree O'Neill  
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Bornface Simangwawa  ~ Frederick Simasku  ~ Martha Smit  ~ David Sprewald  ~ Nick Steffen  ~ Willem Swartbooi  ~ Simon Swartbooi  ~ Frans Swartbooi  
Fortune Tjituzaia  ~ Stephan Trappe  ~ Johannes Tsobeb  ~ Hendrik Tsobeb  ~ Christoph Andries Tsobeb  ~ Jackey Vlees  ~ Angela Von Wietersheim  
Cheryl Walpole  ~ Jessica Webb-Bowen  ~ Barbara Weber  ~ World Teach volunteers’03 ~ Chrissinn Zingelmann  ~

...and those we unfortunately have left out - our apology!

Celebrating 10 YEARS NaDEET Centre
Still practising what we teach...
It is more than just a toilet...

There are some things that are very important, everybody needs and nobody really wants to think about. Toilets are one of these things. When we built NaDEET Centre 10 years ago we had many discussions of what kind of toilets we could or should have. It was clear that we wanted to use as little water or no water at all for our toilets. In the end the budget probably decided for us and simple long drop composting toilets were built. It is quite amazing that with some good and proper weekly maintenance these held out for 10 years. I once read somewhere that the human faeces of one year when composted properly will reduce to the volume of just over half a bucket full. But for proper composting to take its natural course it needs most importantly time.

So after 10 years the number of visitors to the Centre has been steadily increasing and the demand is steadily rising. This of course is a good thing, it means we are successfully fulfilling our goals and the money entrusted to us by our sponsors is well spent, but to the detriment of our old composting toilets. Our trusty composting agents (bacteria) still trudged on doing their job but we threw too much at them and that began to stink… literally. The intervals between visitors have decreased and the gaps between groups have narrowed. We needed a better toilet. After many discussions we decided to stick with the old system but added some special features.

The composting chambers were split into two so that we can move the toilet pedestal from one chamber to the next (within the same toilet room). In being able to do so we can give the composters more time to do their job properly whilst the programme at the centre can still continue. This also significantly enlarged the physical volume of the composting chamber.

The ventilation has been improved, in dry toilet terms often referred to as VIP (Ventilation Improved Pit). This dries out any liquids faster which is very important as they are the main source of bad smell. A urinal for each toilet, to reduce unnecessary urine going through the composting process has been added.

In the end we also continue with our improved look of the Centre so the toilet houses are re-built within the NamibRand building code and in the same style as the main building and houses.

At the time of writing, the toilets are almost complete. Digging a hole in dune sand of over 2000 litres per toilet is as always a great undertaking. Thank you very much to the Speich Education Fund for making this very important enterprise possible. Many would not want to sponsor a toilet but if we wouldn’t have toilets, a very basic need, everything else could not continue.

Andreas Keding

“Weltwärts” Volunteer Programme

One Year in the Desert – challenge accepted

After finishing high school I felt that it is time for a change in my life, so I decided to volunteer for one year in a country with a complete different culture! When I first heard about NaDEET and what the concept is all about, I was eager to experience it myself. Solar cooking, using a bucket shower, exploring the desert environment, living with only the basic of human needs, teaching children and adults about how to live a sustainable lifestyle, getting comfortable working in a workshop – these are things I would have never learned without being at NaDEET. Living together with people from all different backgrounds allowed me to open up and to look beyond my own culture.

Juliane Piloth

NEWS Annual Outing

For the 5th time the Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society (NEWS) invited members and friends to attend its annual outing to NaDEET. Again this year children and adults alike enjoyed a guided dune walk and scenic drive. NEWS donated some of their new cloth bags to the Centre which learners can win as prizes.

First Aid Course @ NaDEET

In May, NaDEET Centre was the venue for a First Aid Course offered by the Johanniter Hilfswerk. Staff members from Wolwedans, Tok Tokkie, NamibRand and NaDEET received comprehensive training which was put in practice during an afternoon session of ‘real life’ emergency scenarios.

Four Years On & Still Going Strong!

Four years on, the Maltahöhe community programme is still well attended. After a week of intensive lessons participants were ready for their tests, which they all passed. Thanks to generous donors through Freundschaft mit NaDEET all 27 participants went home as proud parabolic solar cooker owners.

Last volunteer via GIZ office

Stephan-Sammy-Kolja-Nick-Jule: These were the five weltwärts volunteers at NaDEET through the GIZ. As the Windhoek office is no longer hosting this programme, we say thank you to Programme Director Ulrike von Krosigk for the wonderful partnership.

*NaDEET’s next weltwärts volunteer will be hosted via the German-South African Youth Association
NaDEET thanks our on-going donors and supporters

Our 1 March - 30 June 2013 donors were:

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  Beate - Time Out Travel
  Khooey Vitiello
  Anton Westholm

A special thank you to ...

Ein besonderer Dank geht an ...

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Sandra Dantu
  Sapphire Foundation

Bernard Pinon
  Freundschaft mit NaDEET Committee

Monika Diehl

Olaf Keding
  Marseille Namibie

To our founding supporters:

Berker Family
  Elinor Dürr
  Dorothé & Jürgen Klein
  Wulf & Renate Paulick
  Mayda & Bernard de Winter
In celebration of NaDEET Centre’s 10th anniversary we ask you to consider making a special donation this year to fund our environmental education work. Gifts are welcome in all currencies.

N$ / Euro / USD / other:

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Donations can be made as a bank transfer to our account in:

**Account holder:** NaDEET  
**Bank name:** Bank Windhoek - Kudu Branch  
**Bank address:** Independence Avenue, Windhoek  
**Branch Code:** 482 172  
**Account number:** 3000659951  
**SWIFT:** BWLINANX  
**IBAN:** Not available

**Account holder:** NaDEET  
**Bank name:** Bankhaus Lampe KG  
**Branch Code:** 48020151  
**Account number:** 3013812  
**SWIFT:** LAMPEDDD  
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