

Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)



Update June 2017

It has been a record six months for KEEP with regards to student numbers. Since the beginning of this year we have hosted twelve schools and two holiday groups, totalling almost 1,500 children. We are set to meet our 2016 total of 1,800 by the end of July and are well on our way to reach our goal of 2,500 participants for 2017.

Mid-year is the perfect time to take stock of our progress this year so far and look if all the new and exciting changes we started implementing since the beginning of the year are showing the desired results. We can proudly report that we, and the KEEP participants, have not been disappointed.

One thing that has not changed and never will is the action packed fun and learning that happens out at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve! As we settle into a chilly winter we welcome back some of the Reserve's furry, and sharp-toothed friends, like the leopard! During the rainy season, they became scarce as they followed the herds of plains game that moved with water availability, and likely took advantage of preying on antelope during the calving season. During recent weeks, we have seen plenty of leopard tracks and scats – much to the excitement of the students. The camera traps that we set up earlier in the year with the cooperation and permission of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) confirmed our observations by producing a couple of wonderful and rare leopard images.

Our KEEP team stayed busy during the recent school holidays by welcoming our first two holiday groups. To fill these rather open weeks in our booking calendar, we are now opening this time up for local Namibian participants from orphanages, and community and home schooling. This is an exciting opportunity to have KEEP more accessible to young Namibians of all ranges of life and to expose them to our hands-on environmental learning concept. If you can suggest any additional groups to join us during the next holidays, please get in touch! The first two groups had heaps of fun and we are looking forward to continuing this idea.

After the school holidays, we were very excited to launch our new and updated [KEEP workbook](#). The time spent on editing the text and adding many more illustrations was well spent and the fun filled new edition has proven a great success with students and teachers alike. Only days after making the new KEEP workbook available on the GCF website, we already had a first request to adapt the workbook for use in another part of Africa – stay tuned for more on this in the next KEEP Update.

Another recent highlight in the giraffe community was, of course, World Giraffe Day – 21 June 2017. KEEP joined in the campaign to raise awareness and encourage schools in Namibia to join in celebrating the world's tallest animal. The KEEP Facebook page was full of happy faces showing others how they too could celebrate giraffe and the school group on the day finished off by offering a hearty rendition of 'Happy Birthday to the giraffe' – check out the [KEEP Facebook page](#) to see for yourself. The KEEP team also made sure their voices were heard loud and clear, and took to the radio waves of the Namibian Broadcasting Cooperation (NBC) to talk about this annual event.



During the holiday period, we also spend time setting up a detailed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for KEEP with the help of an external M&E specialist. This will help us to continuously assess KEEP’s activities against set indicators and make sure we stay on track for reaching our goals. As part of developing the M&E plan, our recent intern from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) Ms Priscar Mufungulwa conducted several targeted interviews to establish the overall success of KEEP in reaching the teachers and students, as well as the quality of service provided and of course improvements that could be made. The responses were overwhelmingly positive with most teachers indicating that they would like to return with their next class to participate in our cross-curricular field experience.

GCF’s KEEP is quickly becoming an established household name in environmental education in Namibia and we have been invited to participate in local workshops coordinated by MET and the Ministry of Education (MoE), as well as the annual conference of the Namibian Environmental Education Network (NEEN) that will be held in August. The KEEP team is looking forward to sharing experiences with our Namibian EE colleagues and continue to contribute at a national level.



As you all know, KEEP could not happen without our donors and their continued support. Of course, running at this capacity does come with its challenges and one of these is making sure we have enough funds to provide healthy food and safe and secure transport for all students. Support does not always have to be monetary and can come in many shapes and forms.

One of our biggest needs at the moment is feeding the students that join us on the field. We have made a commitment to provide each student with healthy snacks and a delicious sandwich when joining us in the bush. Many of our students depend on this meal for their day. If you would like to help us provide these nutritious snacks, please get in touch. Your support would make a big difference!

A big thank you goes to MET and MoE for allowing GCF to continue to run this amazing programme at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve and to allow students from the Khomas Region to take part.



