

Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)



Update March 2017

After an eventful and successful first year, the Giraffe Conservation Foundation's Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) started full speed into its second year of implementation. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from educators and students alike was backed up by new and repeat bookings for 2017 coming in before the year had even ended.

Windhoek schools opened mid-January and the programme welcomed their first students in the same week. Since then KEEP has been running almost at full capacity and at the end of the first term we can proudly report that already 837 eager enviro kids have spent a day with us in the field. These students have come from six different schools from the Khomas Region and some of these school are attending KEEP for the second time. What better proof that KEEP is filling a gap and providing an important curriculum addition! But do not take only our word for it. During the last few months, we have developed a comprehensive project log frame and a detailed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for KEEP ensuring that we continue to deliver the best programme we can and remain on track to achieve our long-term goals.

Daan Viljoen Game Reserve is buzzing with life after the long awaited rains have finally arrived. The students have had the opportunity to see frogs throughout their full life cycle from spawn and tadpoles in a puddle all the way to tiny hopping frogs. The rain also brought many other young lives: we are constantly seeing new calves at the moment, from wildebeest to oryx, from hartebeest to of course giraffe. The latter much to the joy of students and teachers (and the KEEP team) alike.

Seeing the dams full and teeming with life has given the team a unique opportunity to teach the kids about the water cycle, the importance of water, and why it needs safe guarding. Learning goes both ways of course and the KEEP team enjoyed learning from the student about what they do to save water at school and at home.

If you participated last year you will recognise some changes! The KEEP team has increased its mobility as it now has its own wheels – our KEEP car is a great asset and helps us to organise and run the programme. Another new addition are the GCF backpacks that the groups can use in the field. They are big enough to carry everything our little explorer groups need for an adventure in the bushveld.

Ms Naemi Antonius, who started off as an intern with KEEP mid last year has taken up a fulltime position as Environmental Educator with KEEP and will hopefully be a long-term addition to the team. There are a few new faces too. Ms Anna Bardwell from the UK has been a great help while volunteering with KEEP since January, showing that an extra pair of hands in the field can make a big difference. As part of KEEP's commitment to enhancing the capacity of students in Namibia, Mrs Priscar Mufungulwa has joined KEEP as part of her studies at the Namibian University of Science and Technology (NUST). Priscar's project is focusing on KEEP's M&E and we look forward to seeing the results of her efforts!

Furthermore, GCF has recently committed to supporting the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) to include a giraffe focused activity into their high school programme. The team at NaDEET is busy developing this section of their curriculum and we are excited to see the results. GCF's giraffe posters will soon be displayed in a number of schools around the country as the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has asked for contributions of environmental education materials to be distributed to rural schools in Namibia.

At the same time, we are very excited to announce that the new KEEP workbook is almost ready to go to print: filled with even more activities, more learning and lots more colouring in fun for kids and adults! To make use of the new workbook, make sure you are booked in for next term.

The KEEP team has also been hard at work spreading the word about the programme and the importance of environmental education as a vital part of the school system. Thank you to Radiowave, 99FM, NBC Radio and the NBC TV news team for hosting us and giving us the opportunity to promote GCF's special initiative. We have had the opportunity to give a presentation to a Rotary Interact group from all over Namibia on all GCF's programmes and of course KEEP.

Beside our school groups, KEEP had a few additional visitors recently. While most visitors come along to find out first-hand what KEEP is all about, these visits are often mutually valuable. During a recent visit from a spider expert, the KEEP team learnt a few interesting facts that they have promptly included into the KEEP curriculum. A visit from a donor representative (Ms Rauna Nghatanga from GEF-Small Grants Fund) as triggered discussions on additional groups that could be invited to join KEEP in the field. If you too are interested to find out what KEEP is all about, why not join us for a day in the field?

As we start to feel the mornings getting cooler and the first term is coming to an end, the team is preparing for the upcoming holidays. Did you know that we will now also be taking holiday groups? If you are interested in bring a group for a fun-filled day in the field and to learn about tracking, the environment and much more, please get in touch.

KEEP could not happen without our donors. Support doesn't always mean money and can come in many 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 light meal when coming to KEEP. Many of the students depend on this meal for the day. If you would like to help us provide these snacks and meal, please get in contact with GCF or the KEEP team! Your support would make a big difference.

A final thank you of course to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the Ministry of Education for allowing GCF and the KEEP team to continue to run the programme from Daan Viljoen Game Reserve and to continue to allow the region's students to take part.



