

Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

Update December 2017



After an exciting and successful first year, the Giraffe Conservation Foundation's Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) continued full speed into its second year of implementation. With many new as well as repeat bookings early in the year we knew that the overwhelmingly positive feedback from educators and students alike in 2016 was backed up and we were excited to take KEEP forward in 2017.

2017 exceeded all expectations. We surpassed our participation target with 2,287 (1,218 girls and 1,069 boys) students who were accompanied by 88 teachers, representing a total of 21 Namibian schools and groups. To keep us busy during school holidays, we opened KEEP to various holiday groups. This has proved to be very popular with afterschool groups, orphanages and other private groups, and we will continue this offer in 2018. While the programme has run at almost full capacity for the field days, a lot has also happened on the administrative and organisational side this year too.



Our enthusiastic and passionate KEEP team has grown and now comprises two permanent staff: GCF's Environmental Education Coordinator Ms Rachel du Raan was backed up by our Environmental Educator Ms Naemi Antonius. The team was further assisted by our EE intern Ms Martha Haukono. Both Naemi and Martha are recent graduates of the Namibian University of Science and Technology and as such part of our larger commitment to support capacity enhancement in the country and provide opportunities for young Namibians.

The KEEP team has also been hard at work spreading the word about the programme and the importance of environmental education (EE) as a vital part of the school curriculum. It is the responsibility of all Namibians to ensure we conserve our precious natural heritage! Thank you to Radiowave, 99FM, NBC Radio, Hitradio and the NBC TV news team for hosting us and giving us the opportunity to promote GCF's



special EE initiative. We look forward to working with you all again and more in 2018!

In addition, we have given several presentations on our work including to a Rotary Interact group and the Namibia Environment and Wildlife Society (NEWS). Such presentations are a fantastic way to share information about our work with the public. Please get in touch if you would like to hear more about our work or are interested to be engaged.

In order to widen our support for EE in Namibia, in 2017 we provided funding to the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) to develop several new units for their secondary school programme that focus on or use giraffe as an example species. Additionally, we provided support for three Namibian school groups to participate in this new, amended programme. As these units now form part of the curriculum for all secondary school groups visiting NaDEET, we will help to raise awareness for giraffe conservation to a much wider audience in the country in 2018 and beyond.

Our KEEP workbook is a living resource and as such we continue to amend and improve it. This year we undertook a thorough review of content and some activity modules. We are very proud of this new and improved version and believe that this in-house teaching resource contributes significantly to the value of KEEP and is one of the aspects that make our programme so special. Not only kids in Namibia love the workbook, but we have had interest across Africa and internationally. We are currently finalising a fully revised and adapted version for Kenya that can be widely used by EE providers and conservation partners in the country.



As our capacity in EE increases, we are also becoming increasingly involved in EE policy development as well as networking opportunities with other EE providers in Namibia. Our team participated in an Environmental Education/Environment for Sustainable Development (EE/ESD) Workshop as part of the development process of a draft policy for EE/ESD for Namibia. What a great opportunity to share our experiences and learn from others. The final policy and its implementation aim to contribute to the empowerment and education of all Namibians to take action for a sustainable future. Furthermore, we joined other EE service providers at a workshop to facilitate a more coordinated approach to EE in Namibia. This provided an excellent networking and learning opportunity.

Building relationships is important to GCF and establishing a firm position in the Namibian EE sector also helps us to collaborate closely with other stakeholders and sectors. In addition to policy support, we continue to collaborate closely with the field staff of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). As one such example, we have now placed two camera traps along the trail in Daan Viljoen Nature Reserve



that we use with our KEEP groups. So far thousands of images were captured, sorted and entered into a database, which is also shared with MET staff. We have already spotted some surprise visitors such as leopard, brown hyena, a young kudu with her impala best friend and of course giraffe, who are at times just too long to fit in the frame. Furthermore, the camera traps are a wonderful teaching aid for our students, helping the team introduce the idea of poaching, sustainability as well as human-wildlife conflict and habitat loss.



This year we have also started to spread our wings a little beyond the Khomas Region, and brought KEEP to other regions in Namibia. In a first trip, we visited three San community schools in the Oshikoto Region and have already planned outreach trips to the Omaheke Region for 2018.

On the programme management side, we have spent valuable time and effort to develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan for KEEP. While we strongly believe that we offer a fantastic programme to Namibian primary school students, the proof is in the pudding and we now have the means to track our successes and pick up early on if things need some additional thought and improvement.

KEEP in numbers (2017)	
238	Kilometres walked by KEEP team
272	Hours spent in the bush
2,375	KEEP workbooks provided to teachers and students
2,375	Sandwiches provided by KEEP
4,750	Feet that walked the KEEP hike
0	Litter left behind

Running almost at full capacity in 2017, our experience has highlighted the need for a dedicated EE programme in the Khomas Region. However, funding continues to be a limiting factor. With large budget cuts within the Ministry of Education very few schools now have the financial means and resources to expose their students to EE opportunities. Many schools in Windhoek are over-prescribed and under-



resourced, and EE might just continue to slide further down the priority list. GCF is committed to making sure this does not happen by keeping EE and conservation firmly at the forefront of education and providing a fun, educational and exciting environmental programme for the children of the region. We do hope that in 2018 we can attract more support, and in particular we ask Namibian organisations and individuals to dig deep and help us to support educating Namibia's future leaders.

In summary, KEEP has had a phenomenal second year of field implementation. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our supporters and donors who have been with us every step of the way! Your continued support of KEEP is a vital part of our commitment to Namibia and to the participating schools.

To follow our activities and find out what our KEEP team is up to on a regular basis, please visit our website (<https://giraffeconservation.org/programmes/keep/>) or follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KhomasEnvironmentalEducationProgramme/>).

