



Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

QUARTERLY UPDATE
July – September 2018



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@Save_Giraffe



With temperatures on the rise, we can safely say that winter is over in Namibia. Seasonal changes of the environment are fascinating to observe and GCF's Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) team is in a prime position to do just that during their regular trips to Daan Viljoen Game Reserve (GR). As we move into the hot and windy period of the year (guess where Windhoek gets its name from?!), most plants have already shed their leaves and the dams are slowly drying up. Animals are notoriously difficult to spot in the dry season as they are such experts in camouflage. What a great learning experience for the students to observe first-hand what strategies animals use to adapt to their environment – sometimes a real challenge that requires the children to use their eagle-eyes to spot them.

As with every school term, our KEEP team has been rather busy with many classes from different primary schools participating in the programme. Most of our participants come from schools in and around Namibia's capital Windhoek, however, as the name KEEP suggests – Khomas is one of the 14 Namibian regions – our programme is open to schools from the entire region. In a KEEP-first, we hosted a primary school from Dordabis, a small settlement about 90km south-east of Windhoek. While logistics were somewhat challenging, it was great to have these students out at Daan Viljoen GR to introduce them to a different part of their beautiful country.



This quarter we hosted students from eight schools, six of which were repeat visits. It is a great sign when schools bring their new grade 4s every year and it also offers a fantastic opportunity for our team to use the feedback to continuously improve the programme. This quarter 803 students participated in KEEP, bringing the grand total to 2,145 students from 23 schools in 2018 so far. Looking at all the happy faces we see in the bush every day, we must be doing something right!

While our KEEP curriculum is so much more than teaching about giraffe, spotting these gangly giants is



always a highlight for the groups. You can probably imagine the excitement when a recent group witnessed giraffe drinking from the little water that was left in the dam. What an amazing sight! Our team has also been keeping an eye out for the giraffe calf and we are happy to announce that it is doing well; happily alive and kicking!

Apart from school groups, we recently hosted a group of Nature Conservation



students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The visit was part of their programme's Environmental Education (EE) module to show them EE in action – they simply tagged along with a primary school class and observed a normal KEEP field day. The students were pretty impressed with KEEP and our team – in particular as our GCF educators where students of the same course only a few years ago. It was great to see some familiar faces for both the NUST students and our team. This experience has now inspired us to extend a similar invitation to other Namibian institutions that offer EE modules to check out what we are doing and get involved hands-on. What a great learning opportunity for everyone – for NUST students to acquire new skills and experience what it means to effectively teach EE, and for our team to get additional feedback and constructive criticism.



As part of our KEEP team's professional development we regularly bring in experts to work with the team. This time, Namibian EE expert and Director of the Namibian Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) Viktoria Keding worked with the team on further improving the delivery of our goals and objectives. Together with the KEEP team she developed innovative ideas on how to make KEEP even more interactive and increase its impact.



The team has already put some of her suggestions into action and are working on incorporating even more of them. Viktoria has many years of experience with EE in Namibia and helped the team to look at aspects of the programme with a fresh eye.

As the 2018 school year is coming to an end, we are almost fully booked until the December holidays. If you are interested in KEEP and want to make a booking, get in early for 2019. Remember – it is the early

bird who gets the worm.

As you know, GCF could not implement KEEP without our donors. Funding remains one of our biggest challenges. Most of our participants are from under-privileged communities and depend on the government schools' feeding schemes. KEEP provides a healthy snack and a sandwich for these students when they join us in the field. Finding a donor/provider for these meals is still an ongoing struggle for us. To keep costs low, our team currently prepares all the sandwiches themselves. If you



would like to help us provide nutritious snacks, please contact us. Your support would make a big difference and remember that your contribution does not necessarily have to be financial.

A big thank you goes to our everyday partners, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for allowing GCF to continue to run this programme at Daan Viljoen GR and the Ministry of Education for allowing students and teachers from the Khomas Region to join us for a memorable day in the bush.

Thanks again for your support.

