



# Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

QUARTERLY UPDATE  
October – December 2020



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As we are approaching the end of 2020, the GCF's Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) team is ready to wave goodbye to this rather odd year. In wrapping up for the year, we are taking the time to review and reflect on our achievements to determine the progress KEEP has made in its fifth year of implementation. But first, we would like to express our gratitude to the few schools, groups and all other organisations that participated in our fun-filled field-based environmental education programme. You truly made our year and we hope to see you and many others in 2021!



2020 started on a positive note and KEEP was off to a great start, with many bookings for field days in the first quarter of the year. One of our 'KEEP regulars' Bethold Himunime Primary School started the year, followed by two schools who were first timers. After some good rainfall in the Khomas Region, there was lots to see in field and we can safely say that all participants had fun. Good rainfall brings many animals back to our walking trail and our participants were lucky to experience this first-hand helping them to reconnect with nature and making the learning fun and adventurous.





As we had updated our work book early in the year, we were excited to use it in the field and looked forward to another busy year of outdoor teaching and educating young Namibians. However, we as the rest of the world, were thrown a curve ball that no one could have expected. When the first Covid-19 cases were reported in Namibia, the Namibian President declared a State of Emergency and closed all Namibian schools with immediate effect. This also stopped our field outings and the countrywide lockdown that was imposed shortly afterwards forced the entire GCF team to work from home. Despite this blow, our team returned to work with lots of new energy and exciting ideas for new and alternative ways to reach young Namibians during a global pandemic. As most Namibian schools reverted to online learning, it became clear that our field programme would not restart in a hurry. This availed an opportunity for our team to start producing short environmental education videos which focused on different environmental topics derived from our curriculum and workbook. Our creative team scripted, filmed and edited the videos themselves and they produced seven episodes which are available on the GCF website and on all our social media platforms. The videos were also shared on WhatsApp with teachers and other interested parties from different schools to use them as valuable teaching tools.



Since many students in remote parts of Namibia have limited or no access to the Internet and do not necessarily follow GCF social media channels, we have now partnered with Tribefire Studios and One Africa TV, a Namibian production company and a television broadcasting cooperation to professionally produce a series of eight environmental education episodes that will be broadcasted on the One Africa TV as well as their associated social media channels. This was another great learning experience for our KEEP team and an opportunity to showcase their talents and love for the environment. We are thrilled about this and cannot wait to see the final products. We hope that these episodes will allow us to reach a far wider audience with our EE message than ever before.

Another exciting project of the KEEP team is an updated and more generic Africa-wide version of our Nature Workbook. We already developed a Kenya specific version in that past, but we have had enquiries from other parts of Africa and the world. This new version will include the most common African wildlife and plants and offer a wider African conservation perspective and include new and fun activities and games. Stay tuned for this new edition in 2021.



Working closely with partners and networking are core values of GCF and obviously our KEEP team is part of this approach. In July, the KEEP team attended the launch of the Namibian National Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development (EE/ESD) Policy. The EE/ESD Policy serves as a guideline for educating and empowering Namibians to be environmentally literate and take responsibility as well as actions for a sustainable future. In addition, the KEEP Coordinator also attended an EE/ESD workshop at the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) Centre in Swakopmund. The workshop aimed to support teachers in the implementation of EE/ESD at their schools and ensure that they have the necessary tools to instill knowledge, skills, and values of ESD through cross-curricular integration. This was a great opportunity to network with other EE/ESD providers in the country.





KEEP mainly focuses on hosting primary school groups. However, with the long school closures this year, it was difficult to reach many students. We have therefore opened KEEP to other groups and extended invitations to different interested parties in order to reach as many young Namibians as possible this year.

As an example, we invited teachers and head of departments to participate in KEEP in order to enhance their environmental knowledge and skills, explore the adventurous field-based programme that their students

partake in and gain new tools to establish environmental clubs at their respective schools. Throughout the year, KEEP hosted several groups of teachers from different schools, including a group of 15 teachers who participated in an eco-mentor training programme hosted by *Children in the Wilderness*, a non-profit organisation that focuses on educating children in rural communities. In addition, we also hosted two groups of tour guides through our partners TOSCO (Tourism Supporting Conservation) Trust and Chameleon Safaris. Hosting these diverse groups was a lot of fun and a great experience for the participants and our KEEP team to exchange knowledge and experiences.





As most schools in Namibia resumed with face-to-face teaching in the last quarter of 2020, the KEEP team was able to return into the bush with a few more schools and groups from after-school programmes. We made sure that all groups adhered to Covid-19 protocols and are hopeful that we can resume to normal implementation of our fantastic field-based programme next year. Despite all these challenges, we hosted an impressive 633 students (322 girls and 311 boys) and 50 teachers from 12 different schools and organisations in the field this year.

As always, and particularly in difficult times like this, we would like to thank our generous donors for their continued support. Allowing us some flexibility with budget lines has been an amazing help this year. With salaries secured and our KEEP team intact, we are ready to continue implementing our successful KEEP field programme and adapt further to precautionary measures if necessary.



Thank you for your continued support.

