



# Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

QUARTERLY UPDATE  
July – September 2021



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As we enter the last school term of the year, we are pleased to share an update from the Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP). Here on the southern hemisphere, the time from May to September are the cooler time of the year and this is the busy time of the year for our team. Schools prefer to join us during the cooler winter mornings and their learners to participate in our fun, interactive and hands-on programme. During this quarter, we hosted a total of 649 learners and 35 teachers from different government schools and other groups. This brings KEEP's total participant number for 2021 to 1,713 learners – an impressive number during this second year of the Covid pandemic, while we were still faced with local lockdowns, school closures and restrictions of public gatherings. Our pre-pandemic annual participation goal was set at 2,500 learners – so given the special circumstances, we are very happy with our achievements so far in 2021.



As always, the KEEP team was busy connecting young Namibians with nature and encourage them to develop a love and a sense of responsibility to care for their own country. We spent time visiting new schools and introducing our programme to a wider audience. As a result, we have hosted a few new schools in the last few months. Faith Primary School was one of these new additions and they showed so much interest and enthusiasm that a whole contingent of teachers including the principal joined their learners during the field outing. The principal highlighted that his team of teachers too wanted to get this field experience and as a faith-based school they were passionate about their pupils. Hosting a school principal was a first for KEEP. We hope that more of our participating schools will send their principals or heads of departments along to experience KEEP firsthand and see the benefit of having their learners participate in EE programmes.



In mid-September, wide-spread bushfires occurred in Namibia, including in Daan Viljoen Game Reserve, where we our field trips takes place. Nearly 70% of the park were burned destroying important habitat for wildlife and their food sources. But as with any situation, there is always a bright side: as the area we use for our programme was not directly affected by the fire, it is now teeming with wildlife. Most wildlife now aggregates along the main entrance road and our hiking trail, and as a result our participants were treated to rare sightings such as monitor lizards, an ostrich egg, and quite a few leopard footprints. In the last few weeks, we had daily sightings of giraffe, including a new-born calf, eland, zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest, oryx and kudu.





As the Namibian schools closed again for face-to-face teaching for a few weeks mid-year, the KEEP team explored alternative ways of engaging with primary school learners in times of COVID-19. In collaboration with the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) we initiated a tree-planting project under the banner of 'Bringing nature to schools'. The project aims to bring learners and teachers closer to nature by bringing nature to them. Five primary schools on the fringes of Windhoek were identified for planting of indigenous trees during the National Arbor Day week in October.



The aim is to also bring groups from these schools on a field trip to the National Botanical Garden of Namibia, where they can learn more about Namibia's flora and the importance of plants. The learners will also be trained in long-term tree care to ensure that their new trees grow and thrive in their school yards. This project will help learners gain an understanding of the importance of indigenous plants in their local environment and it will hopefully inspire them to appreciate the value of planting more indigenous trees in their homes and communities.

As always, we would like to thank our generous donors for their continued support. Allowing us some flexibility with budget lines has been an amazing help during these difficult times. With salaries secured and our KEEP team intact, we are excited to continue implementing our successful KEEP field programme.



Thank you for your continued support.



