



Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

UPDATE
September 2023



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After completing another quarter of 2023, we are pleased to share the latest update from GCF's Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP). The KEEP team continues to actively deliver our outstanding field-based environmental education (EE) programme, providing young Namibians of different ages and backgrounds from the Khomas Region an immersive and at times life-changing opportunity to learn and explore nature.

During this quarter, over 1,300 learners and 64 teachers from 9 different government schools and other groups, including 2 kindergartens joined us in the field for a fun-filled and educational day at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve.

Hosting kindergarten groups for the first time proved to be a new challenge for the team, yet it offered an incredibly rewarding experience at the same time. The KEEP team had to adapt quickly by simplifying the programme content and adjusting it to a level that the kindergarteners could easily understand, while at the same time keeping them engaged with different activities and games to make their day fun and informative. The experience of hosting these two groups served as a reminder of the importance of involving everyone in protecting our planet. It was important for us to recognize that even younger children have a responsibility since we all utilize natural resources like water and electricity and produce waste daily. No one is too young to make a difference and there is a real opportunity for laying the foundations early by educating young children about the significance of conserving and using our natural resources responsibly. This will ultimately contribute to creating a better future for all of us.



Among the schools we hosted this quarter was one school that travelled far to participate in our programme: a group from Otjimbingwe Primary School travelled approximately 195 km from a small town in the Erongo Region. The school contacted us while organizing a four-day trip to Windhoek and opted to include KEEP in their activities after hearing about it from a Windhoek school teacher who highly recommended it. The teacher from a 'KEEP-regular' school described KEEP as a remarkable programme, which would benefit learners from all over the country, as it helps broaden learners' knowledge about conservation and the environment. Most of the learners were already exhausted on arrival after a 4am start in order to arrive on time, however, they were



excited about the opportunity to explore a different part of their home country. We hope they will return to their communities and put what they've learned into practice. We look forward to hosting more schools from beyond the Khomas Region in the future if the opportunity arises.

In addition, we again hosted the second-year Nature Conservation students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) as part of their programme's EE module this year. Since 2018, NUST has offered their students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in environmental education through our KEEP programme. This year, the NUST students joined our KEEP team alongside a normal school group. Each NUST student was assigned a learner as a KEEP buddy and they explored nature together. This helped the NUST students to experience the challenges of implementing a successful EE programme first-hand and offered an in-depth learning opportunity for the primary school students at the same time. We hope that other Namibian institutions that offer EE and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) modules will also partner with us and allow their students an opportunity to experience EE in action.



We are happy to report that this year's long and cold winter season has finally come to an end and after a very short spring, it is now very hot and dry. Every season comes with its challenges, however, our KEEP team makes every season work for them by navigating challenges and opportunities and finding new things to teach in order to provide our participants with an unforgettable experience. During the hot and dry season, it becomes notoriously difficult to spot any animals as they migrate to areas far away from our walking route by following the dry riverbeds that still offer patches of green vegetation. During this time, our team focuses on teaching our young participants and their teachers about the strategies animals and plants use to adapt to their environment. Instead of looking for animals, we look for their droppings and investigate them closely. When breaking pellets, it is easy to observe the difference between ruminants and non-ruminants and this offers an opportunity to discuss in detail how their different digestive systems work. This time of the year also presents an opportunity to talk about climate change and global warming, which are equally important topics.



As the year draws to a close, we are entering the final school quarter. We have a few more schools and groups booked for October and November, after which we will close for the year as schools will concentrate on their final exams in November. We are already accepting bookings for 2024, so please get in touch to secure your spot while you can still choose. This allows you to book your participation in KEEP at the most convenient times of the year for you. You can either take advantage of the rainy season early in the year when the environment is lush and green and there is plenty to see, or you can opt for the cooler winter months to avoid the heat of the day.

So, as always, we would like to use this opportunity to thank all our generous donors for their continued support.



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