



Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP)

UPDATE
December 2023



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As 2023 comes to a close, we are happy to report on another successful year of implementing the Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) and raising environmental awareness with young primary school students in Namibia.

Before we delve into our year-end highlights and achievements, we want to thank all the schools, groups, and organizations – both new and repeat – that joined our KEEP team for an educational field day at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve this year. Your participation kept us busy throughout the year, and your positive feedback reassured us of the value of our programme. However, most importantly, it also showed us that you had a great time while learning about our beautiful country, the environment, conservation, and most importantly, giraffe! Well done to all of you for supporting our efforts in educating Namibia's youth and building a generation of environmentally literate future leaders. We look forward to hosting your students again next year!

This year, KEEP hosted over 3,200 students accompanied by 170 teachers from 28 different schools and organisations. This incredible number brings the overall total of KEEP participants to over 18,000 students and 900 teachers since we first started the programme in 2016.

2023 began on a positive note, with many of our 'KEEP regulars' booking early. While most of our participating schools come every year, there are always some new schools joining who have heard about KEEP through colleagues or other networks. This year we hosted 6 new schools including 2 kindergartens. 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. Other extraordinary groups that joined us during holiday periods came from a soup



kitchen for vulnerable children and orphanages. Hosting the group from the soup kitchen was a very special and moving experience as they provide food for homeless, disadvantaged, and orphaned children in Windhoek and the KEEP field day was a very special adventure for these children. For us, this experience served as a reminder of the importance of involving everyone in protecting our planet and that everyone has a responsibility regardless of age, background, or race.



Among the other schools we hosted this quarter was one school that travelled far to participate in our programme: a group from Otjimbingwe Primary School travelled almost 200 km from Namibia's first (unofficial) capital located in the Erongo Region. As part of a four-day trip to Windhoek, the students joined KEEP on the recommendation of a Windhoek school teacher, who



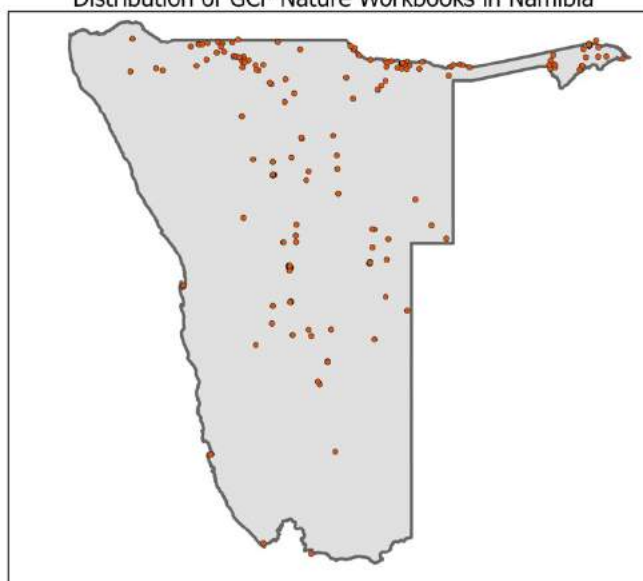
described KEEP as a remarkable programme, which would benefit learners from all over the country, as it helps broaden learners' knowledge about conservation and the environment. We hope that the students returned to their communities and put what they learned into practice. We look forward to hosting more schools from beyond the Khomas Region in the future if the opportunity arises.



This year, we also hosted the second-year Nature Conservation students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) again as part of their programme's EE module. Since 2018, NUST has offered their students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in environmental education through our KEEP programme. This time we managed to schedule the NUST students together with a school group, which allowed us to partner each NUST student with a learner as a KEEP buddy and they could explore nature together. This experience opened the NUST students' eyes to the challenges of implementing a successful EE programme and offered an in-depth learning opportunity for the primary school students at the same time.

In other news, GCF is spreading its conservation message further throughout Namibia. When a school from the Omaheke Region requested to use our GCF Nature Workbook for their field trip to the Waterberg Plateau Park last year, we realised that there was a real need for additional teaching resources in schools all over the country. We initially printed 5,000 copies of the GCF Nature Workbook and relied on the Namibian education grapevine. So far, we have distributed over 9,000 copies to numerous schools in all 14 Namibian regions and we just printed another batch of 5,000 workbooks that we will distribute in the New Year. The feedback we have been receiving from schools is overwhelmingly positive, and teachers are excited about this useful resource for

Distribution of GCF Nature Workbooks in Namibia





promoting environmental awareness at their schools. Some schools use the GCF Nature Workbooks for their environmental clubs, and others have even placed them in their school libraries.

In addition to teaching EE, the KEEP team is also an active member of the Namibian Environmental Education Network (NEEN) and attended their annual conference in October. The conference brings EE stakeholders from all over Namibia together, including educators, government representatives, students from the University of Namibia, representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), teachers and learners, to share knowledge and experiences, and to discuss challenges and new ideas. This year's conference was held at the Hardap Resort of Namibia Wildlife Resorts under the theme: The Role of Learning and Agency in the Transition to the Decarbonization of the Namibian Economy and the Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conference was well attended, and the KEEP team delivered a well-received presentation on our programme, its impacts, and our achievements. We received a lot of positive feedback on the GCF Nature workbook as a valuable tool that helps many Namibian schools integrate EE and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in their curriculum.



As every year, KEEP bookings slow down towards the end of the year, during the exam season and school holidays. This presents an opportunity to tackle additional activities such as reviewing our teaching materials, hosting children from orphanages, after-school programmes and youth groups, and anything else that supports our mission of increasing environmental awareness in the Khomas Region. In November, when most Namibian schools were preparing for their final exams, the KEEP team visited several schools to observe their learning environments and determine whether these schools needed assistance with cleaning their school environments. The KEEP team conducted cleaning campaigns at four different schools, involving students in order to motivate and make them realize the value of learning in a clean environment and that it is their responsibility to maintain it as such.



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.

