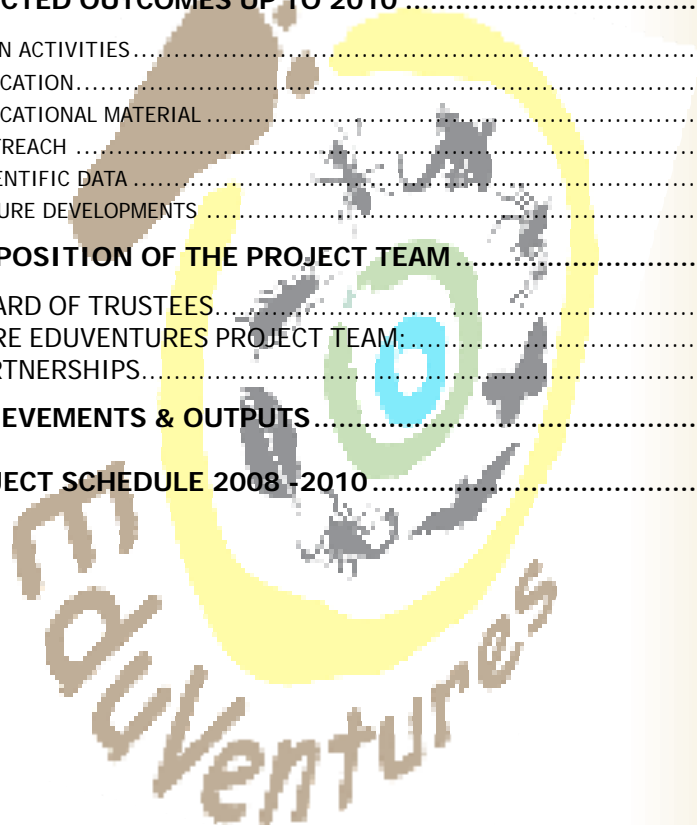


EduVentures In Brief

July 2007

CONTENT

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT	2
GOALS OF THE PROJECT	2
BACKGROUND	2
PROJECT HISTORY.....	2
EDUVENTURES AS A TRUST	2
CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT.....	3
IMPLEMENTING SITES.....	3
TARGET AUDIENCE	3
CONTENTS OF CURRICULUM	3
EXPECTED OUTCOMES UP TO 2010	4
MAIN ACTIVITIES.....	4
EDUCATION.....	4
EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL	4
OUTREACH	4
SCIENTIFIC DATA	4
FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS	4
COMPOSITION OF THE PROJECT TEAM	5
BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....	5
CORE EDUVENTURES PROJECT TEAM.....	5
PARTNERSHIPS.....	5
ACHIEVEMENTS & OUTPUTS.....	5
PROJECT SCHEDULE 2008 -2010.....	8



OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

The keys to environmental protection are people and knowledge. EduVentures guides **Namibian youth** to make informed and accountable environmental choices and decisions, and contributes directly to Namibia's environmental knowledge (mainly biodiversity). This is achieved through its three core functions - education, scientific data collecting, social upliftment – and a step-by-step approach. Quality input on an individual level combined with a rigorous selection process of participants ensures that **leaders** are cultivated that have a **strong environmental and social conscience**. During expeditions (with scientists and educators) and science programmes, children actively collect biodiversity data. These highly effective **hands-on environmental learning** activities simultaneously bring in **quality scientific data** (indispensable for sustainable development e.g. monitoring of development projects) for Namibia's biodiversity institutions. Various post-expedition activities **sustain and broaden the educational effort** started during expeditions: these guide Namibian youth to reach their full potentials, to learn about and debate global and local environmental threats, to become active citizens and leaders in their societies. Together with the **social upliftment** component, these prepare and assist young Namibians to achieve their dreams, to their own and Namibia's benefit.



GOALS OF THE PROJECT

BACKGROUND

EduVentures was initiated in Namibia in 2003 to address the general lack of environmental awareness, the shortage of finances and skilled manpower to do biodiversity surveys crucial for sustainable development, and the culture of environmental and social indifference in the Namibian society.

EduVentures' core functions are education, research, and social upliftment. These are of equal importance, addressed in the following three main **OBJECTIVES**:

- i. Collect **scientific data** (mainly biodiversity data): Natural history collections form the backbone of biodiversity conservation (including species inventories, new species descriptions and inference of species distributions) and therefore of sustainable development monitoring and evaluation.
- ii. Provide **environmental learning experiences** and activities to young Namibians: Most Namibians do not have the chance to travel inside Namibia, and do not having experience-based learning opportunities. This makes feelings of environmental

ownership nearly impossible.

- iii. Assist young Namibians to become **leaders** within qualities and to enrich their perceptions: Only when leaders understand the value of a healthy environment for human well-being, AND have the vision and accountability to address this, can they drive society towards sustainable development to the benefit of both the environment and society.

PROJECT HISTORY

EduVentures was started by a Secondary School teacher and a scientist of the National Museum of Namibia. Since its inception it was fully dependent on donor funding. The Museum, realizing the importance of the project in the Namibian context, provided facilities (office space) and contributed to manpower. With donor funding EduVentures were later able to employ assistants and to acquire some of its own equipment. Given the extremely low budget and many constraints (e.g. many expeditions on the verge of last-minute cancellations due to lack of transport/funding) within which EduVentures operated to date, the EduVentures outputs and successes are beyond what even EduVentures expected. In the last years it grew tremendously, with many activities added, Standard Operating Procedures and policies developed and a Social Fund started. However, this lack of funding, infrastructure and permanent staff prevents it to reach the outputs it envisages. In order to make it more sustainable, EduVentures applied in 2006 for full NGO status (with a Board of Trustees).

EDUVENTURES AS A TRUST

Since 06 June 2007 EduVentures is registered as a TRUST. This would allow it to function as a well-defined organization, able to plan in the long-term, getting more kids involved and increasing its outreach activities. As a **small 'new' organization** EduVentures needs funds to **acquire the necessary infrastructure (mainly vehicles) and staff** and to secure funding for **ongoing and new activities**, in particular **initiating the EduClub programme** to broaden, strengthen and structure the post expedition activities.



Participants are encouraged and equipped to play an active role in society and to become responsible and accountable role models that promote

sustainable living and biodiversity conservation and moral and ethical conduct. EduVentures believes that such intense educational and personal development efforts hold an incremental **long-term environmental and social benefit to Namibia**. And in addition to achieving all of this, the learners actually contribute something concrete (biodiversity data) towards Namibia's environmental knowledge-base.

CONTENTS OF THE PROJECT

IMPLEMENTING SITES

EduVentures is **based in Windhoek**, the capital of Namibia. For logistical reasons the focus is on learners from schools in and around Windhoek, but opportunities are also given to learners from outside towns, rural areas and indigenous groups to become part of EduVentures. Expeditions and EduClub excursions and activities take place anywhere in Namibia (although the EduClub facilities and educator will be based in Windhoek where most non-excursion EduClub activities will take place).

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience is the Namibian youth from a **diversity of backgrounds** (cultural, racial, gender, abilities, economical, etc.). They **enter the project at age 14-17 years old and can stay until the age of 25**. EduVentures fosters youth which **show potential to become role models** of society: learners are invited (mostly through talks at schools but also through the media), they apply to participate, then go through a rigorous selection process and only those that show qualities like self-motivation, innovation, keenness and teamwork spirit are selected to go on an expedition.



CONTENTS OF CURRICULUM

EduVentures guides the learners through a **step-by-step structured programme**:

1st The **data collecting EXPEDITIONS** provide hands-on learning and environmental experiences, and lay the foundation for other activities and skills acquisition, whilst

simultaneously contributing high quality and extremely valuable scientific data crucial to sustainable development. Expeditions take place in school holidays (2-3 per year), each with 15-18 children accompanied by scientists,

educators and local guides. Expeditions are physically and mentally challenging. They are **two-week long hiking trips** conducted in (i) remote areas (ii) of high conservation significance for which (iii) little biodiversity data is available. During the expeditions the children (i) **collect specimens** (insects, spiders, reptiles, etc.) for Namibia's biodiversity collections (housed at National Museum of Namibia and the Herbarium) while (ii) learning about the environment in a very effective hands-on manner (**experience- base learning**).

For children that never get opportunities to see Namibia's natural beauty, visiting various remote areas of Namibia's natural heritage. Likewise, learners are exposed at an early age to scientific environments, contributing directly to Namibia's scientific knowledge. Expeditions contribute environmental data to Namibia's scientific collections which are in turn crucial for sustainable development planning, evaluation and monitoring.

2nd Learners that completed an expedition become full **eduventurers** and part of the **EDUCLUB PROGRAMME** where they have access to an education centre, a lab with computers and a fulltime educator; where they can get advice and assistance concerning e.g. school projects and homework, internet research and personal issues. They also have access to **various structured weekly activities**. These are organized with the aims of (i) sustaining the environmental education efforts started during the expedition, (ii) building capacity in various fields (incl. scientific capacity), (iii) building mental, social and physical skills of individual learners, (iv) broadening horizons and cultivating enquiring minds, and (v) providing platforms for informal socializing between youth from a diversity of backgrounds:

- Visits to science centres and institutions e.g. Amateur Astronomical Observatory, Geological Museum, National Museum display centres
- Visits to educational institutions e.g. University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia
- Visits to environmental education centres e.g. CCF (Cheetah Conservation Fund), NADEET, Africat
- Visit national and international research projects in Namibia e.g. Biota, Brown Hyena project, Acacia
- Training: Applying for jobs, Social conduct, Computer skills
- Guidance: Career
- Debates on issues concerning e.g. environment, culture, sexuality, AIDS
- Educational Films
- Talks e.g. motivational and informational talks by visiting scientists, environmentalists, 'movers and shakers' in various fields, etc.
- Other activities e.g. interschool exchange visits, community projects like removing alien invasive plants and clean up operations



As part of the **outreach** component there will be a monthly 'bring a friend' day as well as an annual 'Education Open Day'.

Also part of the EduClub outreach, EduVentures will have a pilot project involving two schools who will be assisted in starting an environmental club at the school. The pilot project will allow EduVentures to evaluate the feasibility of starting a school EduClub network. The School EduClubs will initially be run by eduventurers (under guidance of EduVentures staff). This enables the **learners themselves to take responsibility in educating their fellow Namibians** thereby promoting even further their ability to become future leaders and role models in society.

3rd

Eduventurers can apply to partake in the **SCIENCE EDUVENTURES PROGRAMME** (launched 2006, and to take place every second year) during which they get an opportunity to do a science project under the guidance of Namibian scientists and students from tertiary institutions as assistant mentors. It involves a fieldwork camp during which they gather their data, workshops about the "scientific method", "ethics in science", "presentation of results", etc. Projects are entered into the National and International Science Fair competitions held annually in Namibia, and results presented at a public talk and written up in an accessible format (e.g. book or newspaper series of articles).



4th

EduVentures recognizes that it is only when humans feel secure in their basic and social needs that they can contribute to society. Unfortunately many gifted Namibian young people are left after schooling without options and drifting between unrealistic expectations – young people that could otherwise be drivers in society thus become a burden to society in general and the environment in particular. EduVentures supports promising youth in various ways towards becoming fulfilled citizens. The EduVentures **SOCIAL PROGRAMME** provides support for individual learners in the form of educational courses, mentorship, financial assistance and seeking scholarships. The level of this support is directly linked to the level of self motivation, self-drive and enthusiasm showed by the particular learner.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES UP TO 2010

Main activities

- 8 expeditions (two per year)
- 2 Science EduVentures (every second year with at least six research projects done by schoolchildren under the guidance of scientists and entered into the Science Fair competitions held annually in Namibia)

Education

- EduClub programme initiated and fully functional including structured weekly activities e.g. excursions, workshops, discussions & debates about topical environmental issues
- Science Lab/EduClub centre better equipped (currently only one computer)

Educational material

- Field booklets for use during the expeditions (one per expedition for each participant)
- Books (1-2 per year depending on scope of book and needs identified): Expedition and Science EduVentures related educational information
- Posters about environmental information and scientific methods for schools and/or EduClub use
- Webpage: regularly updated with updated topical environmental issues and interesting biological articles

Outreach

- Media: media release (i) after each expedition, each based around an educational message (e.g. indigenous knowledge, biodiversity as treasures, new species discoveries), (ii) after noteworthy events e.g. book releases, new species discovery, (iii) on results of the Science EduVentures projects
- Public talks: (i) after each expedition, each based around an educational message (e.g. indigenous knowledge, biodiversity as treasures, new species discoveries), (ii) presenting results of the Science EduVentures projects
- Two school clubs set up and functional

Scientific data

- Scientific specimens: 1000-4000 biological specimens collected per expedition – all accessioned, databased, sorted to a workable taxonomic level (at least family level) and deposited in Namibia's national biodiversity collections
- Scientific publications and dissemination of gathered information
- Databases kept updated (e.g. literature, new species identifications)

Future developments

Establishment of youth networks (including School EduClub networks); Strengthening the sustainability of EduVentures as an organization; Development of Namibian targeted comic-based educational material.



COMPOSITION OF THE PROJECT TEAM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

EduVentures is steered by a Board of Trustees (5 board members; all with a strong environmental education background)

CORE EDUVENTURES PROJECT TEAM:

- **Director** (Holger Vollbrecht): Responsible for the smooth and accountable running of EduVentures and all its projects. In charge of general logistics, technical and administrative aspects.
- **Educator** (Position vacant)*: Fully responsible for the running of the EduClub, including organizing weekly activities, teaching and mentoring of individual eduventurers, liaising with schools and learners and providing educational materials. Assist with public talks.
- **Scientist** (Position vacant)*: Quality control of specimens. Final quality control over individual learner science projects. Fully responsible for processing of all collected specimens (sorting, accessioning, databasing, identified by specialists

(incl. sending to the relevant specialists worldwide if needed). Advise on areas for expeditions. Disseminating data (write-ups, articles for websites, discoveries).

All staff members responsible for educational material development, including contributions to website.

PARTNERSHIPS

National Museum of Namibia, Schools (15 schools to date), Environmental and Wildlife Society (NEWS), University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia, Namibian Rössing Foundation, Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), IMLAST Namibia, and The Association for Children with Language Speech and Hearing Impairments of Namibia (CLaSH).

* The EduVentures educator, Benson Muramba, started with full-time studies, EduVentures scientist, Tharina Bird, is taking up further studies. As employees of the National Museum they were both part of the initial support to EduVentures. Thus, no educator (as of January 2007) and no scientist (as of August 2007) will be part of the core EduVentures team. Both B. Muramba and T. Bird will, however, continue with steering EduVentures as part of the Board of Trustees.

ACHIEVEMENTS & OUTPUTS

expeditions



During expeditions learners learn about the environment while collecting scientific specimens (insects, spiders, reptiles, etc.). F.I.t.r: Looking over the Namib Desert from the remote Chowagas Mountain (6th expedition), a new species of rock scorpion discovered by EduVentures, holding a scorpion in the remote Baynes Mountains (8^d expedition), and collecting in the Gaap River (7th expedition).

after activities



Post-expedition activities broaden horizons, build skills and develop leadership qualities. F.I.t.r: Visiting a cave in the Otavi Mountains, learning about wild cats at Amani Lodge, getting a lecture about solar power, and visiting



the Astronomical Observatory outside Windhoek.

science eduventures



In the Science EduVentures learners do a science project under guidance of local scientists. F.I.t.r: Fieldwork (setting an automatic light trap), sorting collected specimens in the EduVentures Science Laboratory, attending a workshop learning about aspects like 'the scientific method' and 'ethics of science', and some of the medals received on the Regional and National Science Fairs.



social upliftment



The social programme provides individual support in the form of educational courses, mentorship, financial assistance and scholarships. F.I.t.r: a full scholarship awarded to Hilma Nuule by St Pauls' College, Himba boys visit DHPS (a private school in Windhoek), Jackson Hilifilwa did a course in stain glass window making, and an anti-alcohol play by deaf learners at St. Pauls' College (note the 'deaf applause').



outreach & media



EduVentures follows a quality approach, focussing on guiding individuals towards reaching their full potential, but through its outreach activities and media articles EduVentures ensures that a larger audience is reached. F.I.t.r.: Benson Muramba giving an EduVentures Public talk, showing some of the articles placed in numerous newspapers and magazines, Benson Muramba giving a lecture to tourguides about spiders, and EduVentures learners manning a stall at the Botanical Garden's Open Day.



skills



Acquiring a wide variety of skills is part and parcel of the EduVentures programmes. F.I.t.r.: Acquiring public speaking, data analysis, laboratory and computer skills.

eduventures structure



EduVentures developed a structure to streamlines activities and data mangement and to provide the framework within which EduVentures operates. F.I.t.r.: The small EduVentures library, EduVentures databases (specimens, literature and photos), EduVentures Standard Operating Procedures, and the EduVentures website.

output



EduVentures uses its outputs as an indicator of its yearly achievements. Clockwise f.I.t.r.: Nearly 13,000 (bringing total to approx. 18,000) biological specimens collected, numerous educational and promotional materials produced (posters, booklets, education sheets), skilled fieldworkers assisted research projects and visiting scientists (eduventurer Tauna Ilpinge with world scorpion expert Dr. Prendini on a scorpion collecting fieldtrip), a large number of learners entered into the EduVentures programme, cultural interactions facilitated, a science lab opened by the Minister of Youth, new signs added to the Namibian sign language.



PROJECT SCHEDULE 2008 -2010

YEAR	MONT H	PHASE OF PROJECT
2008	1-3	Science EduVentures '08 pre-workshops Science EduVentures '08 fieldwork (theme: indigenous knowledge of San people) EduClub initiated; weekly EduClub activities start
	4-6	Science EduVentures '08 post-workshops 11 th & 12 th expeditions (back-to-back Namibia/Angola – first time expedition will be held outside Namibia; Angolan expedition with Angolan children; Angolan expedition with USAID funding) Weekly EduClub activities
	7-9	Science EduVentures '08 13 th expedition Weekly EduClub activities
	10-12	Science EduVentures '08 presentation of final results Weekly EduClub activities
2009	1-3	Weekly EduClub activities Science EduVentures '08 publication of results
	4-6	14 th expedition Weekly EduClub activities
	7-9	15 th expedition Weekly EduClub activities
	10-12	Weekly EduClub activities
2010	1-3	Science EduVentures '10 pre-workshops Science EduVentures '10 fieldwork Weekly EduClub activities
	4-6	16 th expedition Science EduVentures '10 post-workshops Weekly EduClub activities
	7-9	17 th expedition Science EduVentures '10 Weekly EduClub activities
	10-11	Science EduVentures '10 presentation of final results Weekly EduClub activities

