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WHAT WAS YOUR BEST CEPA INTERVENTION IN THIS TRIENNIUM?

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Your Position/Role and Country:

NGO CEPA Focal Point, Namibia

Title of your CEPA activity/product

World Wetlands Day event at the coast 2012

Other collaborators – please identify other organizations that assisted you or were your partners

Dept of Water Affairs MAWF, Min Enviro & Tourism, NamWater, Polytechnic of Namibia, Coastal Environmental Trust of Namibia, Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources, Basin Management Committees in Namibia, 5 Schools, Tour operators at the coast, Media – The Namibian and Namib Times, Gobabeb Training 7 Research Centre, NACOMA, NamPort, Municipalities of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, CETN Coastal Environmental Trust of Namibia.

Key stakeholder group(s) targeted by your product/activity (e.g. decision-makers, teachers, families, journalists etc.)

Nature Conservation 2nd and 3rd Year Polytechnic students
Learners from 5 schools each linked to River Basin Mgmt Committee, altogether 99 young people participated in the actual activities. Also attended by journalists, water resource organisations, tour operators and the Governor of Erongo Region as well as teachers.

When did this event take place/when was your product launched?

Thursday and Friday 23 and 24 February 2012 at the coast

What was your key message?

That Wetland tourism is truly an amazing experience. Feed back presentations focused on how particular wetland tourism activities support people and wetlands.

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Brief description of your product/ activity / material you used

Tourist operators at the coast who have activities based on the Walvis Bay wetlands – one of our Ramsar sites, were invited to offer their activity to a group of scholars and students. Five half-day activities were offered, Kayaking in the lagoon with seals, Boating with the Mola mola boat across the lagoon and returning by 4x4 along the coast watching birds, A visit to the salt works followed by an exploration of the inter-tidal rock pools on the rocky shore, A bird walk along the lagoon followed by a harbour tour by NamPort, a trip across the lagoon in a Catamaran. Tour operators agreed and gave their service free or at drastically reduced rates, allowing 99 students and scholars to experience wetland tourism directly. At the Swakopmund youth centre students were briefed, given presentations on Ramsar and the Walvis Bay wetland by the Polytechnic students, a talk on upwelling along the Namib coast by Dr Kreiner from Fisheries, and a video by Nacoma on the natural resources and conservation value of our coast. The next morning all went out to enjoy their wetland tourism experience in groups of 20 students and scholars. After lunch the students and scholars together prepared presentations on the activity they had participated in, linking it to the slogan of tourism supporting people and wetlands. The school children gave their powerpoint presentations that evening relating their experience and its value to wetlands and people at a special dinner at the Alte Brücke lodge. The event was reported in the coastal newspaper, in the largest National daily paper as well as on NBC news and the breakfast show. One group of 14 young learners from Heroes Private School in Ondangwa, gave an excellent play on water basin management committees and their role in wetland management which was the highlight of the evening. It was a great success and good feedback was received from all the teachers involved as well as from all the 35 the Polytechnic students, who made the event an integral part of their Aquatic Ecosystems Management course excursion and wrote the press releases. A good time was had by all, arguably our best national World Wetland Day activity yet.

What was your intended outcome from this product/activity? (e.g. change in behaviour of target group; volunteer help with a wetland project; newspaper article)

Direct awareness of values of wetlands and tourism to 99 students and learners and their teachers, and indirectly national awareness of the day and value of wetland tourism via the radio coverage and newspaper articles. An article by the students has been submitted to Roan News for publication – it is the journal of the Namibian Environment and Wildlife society so will reach the conservation community too. Hopefully the children will pass on the message to their schools, environment clubs, parents and friends too.

What kind of impact did this activity/product have on the target audience?

It was a great success. Their enthusiastic feedback and sheer joy in the activities showed how much all had enjoyed the wetland experience – truly a Great experience

Is there a follow-up activity/product planned, if yes briefly describe

The article for Roan News, the press releases. The 35 students and the 5 teachers all gave written evaluations on the event under the headings, Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness with most ranking all activities as either a 4 or 5 out of 5. The committee who co-operated from a diverse range of Govt depts and NGO and Academic inst and River Basin Mgt Committees as well as private sector tour operators have learnt how well CEPA techniques can be applied to arrange a successful national event, that is FUN.

Why do you identify this as your best CEPA intervention? What makes it stand out?

It was learning by doing and by having FUN. It worked and the cooperation of all was amazing.

What was the source of your funding?

Funding was shared with contributions from Dept of Water Affairs, Ministry Environment & Tourism, NACOMA, Polytechnic of Namibia, with voluntary services by the Tour operators, media, teachers, river basin management committees, lecturers, scientists from Fisheries, individuals from the Coastal Environmental Trust of Namibia



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CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)