



**Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Facilitators Project
Nieuwoudtville - South Africa**

CEPF final report
30 April 2006

**Implementing agency: Indigo development & change, Nieuwoudtville
Project coordinator: Bettina Koelle**



Introduction

The Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity facilitators project has been funded since the 1 January 2004 by SKEP/CEPF. This project is also supported by CREW/SANBI.

The project purpose of the Biodiversity Facilitators project is to create a coordinating structure to raise awareness of biodiversity in the Nieuwoudtville area, through facilitation of exchange between local communities and researchers and interactive learning events for school children.

The envisaged project outputs are as follows:

A Biodiversity Group (Steering Committee) consisting of representatives from the different sectors of the Nieuwoudtville community (including people from all races, genders and economic backgrounds) and the scientific community initiate ideas and guide biodiversity conservation related activities in the region.

Two Biodiversity Facilitators are based in Nieuwoudtville area, coordinating and facilitating awareness raising events and knowledge exchanges (involving local

communities and the scientific community). The Biodiversity Facilitators report to the Steering Committee.

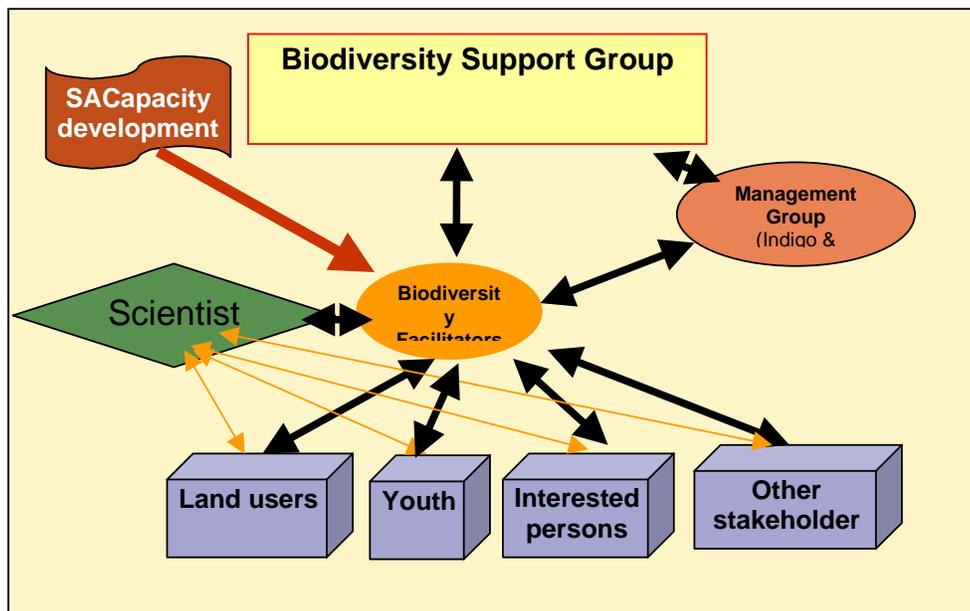
Project Activities 2005/ 2006

- **The Biodiversity Support Group**

The Biodiversity Support group was established with participation of local stakeholders. The Biodiversity Support Group has members from the following local constituencies: Northern Cape Nature Conservation (Nieuwoudtville office), Protea High School, Nieuwoudtville Primary School, Hantam Municipality, Indigo development & change, and also includes 1 farmer, 1 guest house owner and SANBI/ CREW.

The members of the Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Support Group are fulfilling an advisory function towards the project.

The Biodiversity Support Group has been meeting every 3 months to review the activities implemented by the Biodiversity Facilitators but has also more and more been focusing on biodiversity in the area, threatened plants, supporting the Hantam Municipality in managing its reserves and monitor developments in Nieuwoudtville and their potential impact on Biodiversity. The Biodiversity Support Group is going strong and is well supported by all its members. It has changed its role from an initial steering committee for the Biodiversity Facilitators Project to a body that also monitors biodiversity in the area and has become an important point of integration within the Nieuwoudtville community.



- **Employment of Biodiversity Facilitators**

“The Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Facilitators project’s aim is to raise awareness among all age groups about the biodiversity in the area. Another of the projects aims is to share knowledge with all whom are interested. The purpose of the Eco Club is to join various groups of people to not only teach, but to learn from each other. The Eco Club has come to be resource centre in town for scholars and a place where people feel safe and happy.”

(Lu Anne De Beer, Biodiversity Facilitator)

Since June 2005 both biodiversity facilitators have decided to move on, each going into different fields using the skills that they have developed during the months of working as biodiversity facilitator in Nieuwoudtville. Subsequently two new biodiversity facilitators have been employed: both young local women passionate about the environment and local Biodiversity. These biodiversity facilitators are both energetic and enthusiastic and have been crucial in carrying the objective of the project forward.

During the past months both biodiversity facilitators have been very dedicated to raising awareness in different ways with children and adults. Most of the activities were planned and organized by the facilitators themselves, thus giving them the chance to have the experience planning and facilitation on their own. In the past the Biodiversity Facilitators have strongly relied of the support of the Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Support Group as well as the Management Group. With an increased independence the Biodiversity Facilitators are still reporting to the Biodiversity Support Group and are supported in their various activities by a range of its members.

The Biodiversity Facilitators are also convening the Biodiversity Support Group meetings, compiling minutes of planning meetings, field reports and present the activities of the Biodiversity Group to a wider audience, such as conferences and the annual SANBI CREW workshop.

- **Establishing an Office for the Biodiversity Facilitators**

Since the Standard Bank building has been sold, a new office for the Eco Club had to be found. On the 28th of June 2005 the team from the Eco Club moved from the Standard Bank building to the new offices locates in an old sandstone building on the main road next to the local information office.

The new office has more space and more children can be accommodated for indoor activities.

Another reason that makes the new office attractive is that there is a large area that can be used by the Eco to make a community vegetable garden. However with the ongoing drought and municipal water restrictions this project had to be put on hold.

- **Activities with children and land users**

The Biodiversity Facilitators and members of the Biodiversity Support Group organized a range of activities offering rich learning experiences to a variety of

groups in Nieuwoudtville and surrounding areas. Some activities included the monitoring of rare and endangered plants in the area using a GPS and subsequently creating maps.

“With all activities we try to not only teach the participants by giving them only facts, but there is always a physical and creative exercise where they have to use the skills in a practical experience.”

Donna Kotze, Biodiversity Facilitator

The Eco Club has also engaged local tourism businesses in discussions around local biodiversity and eco tourism. The monitoring of local tourism activities and the impact on Biodiversity is an ongoing activity.

• **Winter School**

The Winter School that was held from the 4 - 7 of July 2005 was a big success. There was a lot of local interest from both children and adults. Many activities were planned and a lot of knowledge was exchanged by participants and those who were facilitating the activities. Some of the activities that were presented are as follows:

- How to make your own garden
- Experience the route: Hiking
- Art workshop
- Rock art presentation
- Harvesting of wild Rooibos tea: Ecology and Fynbos
- Tourism business development workshop

• **Summer School**

The summer school was held on the 5-8 of December 2005. Many local people were interested in facilitating an activity of their own. Quite a few “eco groups” from different areas have sent a champion to the Nieuwoudtville Summer School with the aim to learn from the Eco Club and to share insights about their particular activities. It was seen as a great opportunity to exchange knowledge among all participants.

• **Flower Reserve**

The Nieuwoudtville Wild Flower Reserve is a very special place as it has a large concentration of Nieuwoudtville rare and endangered plant species. Together the Eco Club, both Junior and High school participants and the Hantam Municipality have come to work together with the aim to protect and conserve the biodiversity of the reserve. Many excursions have been planned with children exploring the different plants in the reserve, their pollinators and ecology.

The Project has also started restoring of the Flower Reserves information office. With support of the Biodiversity Support Group and a group of High school learners it first steps have been taken to compile information about local Biodiversity in the reserve, to compile maps and photos for the exhibition.

• **Newsletter**

The newsletter is being published once every two-four months informing about the local activities of the Eco Club and giving information about local Biodiversity as well as upcoming events.

- **Media-Eco Club**

On the 29th of September to the 1st of October 2005 the film crew of DSA (Destination South Africa) came to Nieuwoudtville. The aim of this television crew is to go to different destinations and to ask children between the ages of 9-15 to be the presenters. They used three local children each belonging to the Eco Club.

Different topics were covered such as the sandstone found locally in Nieuwoudtville, Restio-houses and medicinal plants and unique biodiversity of bulbs in the area. For both Biodiversity facilitators and the children involved it was a great learning experience and an opportunity to gain confidence. All three short documentaries were screened on national television.

- **GPS activities: identifying local biodiversity**

A biodiversity excursion throughout town was planned the aim of this activity was to identify local hotspots. Together the Eco Club and high school students worked together to identify these areas and also to mark them off. Once these special areas were marked off a meeting was held with the Hantam Municipality. The scholars that were part of the excursion held a PowerPoint presentation. The aim of this meeting was to ask the Municipality to help protect the last of the rare and endangered species that are found in town. The Hantam Municipality was more than willing to work together with the Eco Club.

Encouraged by the Hantam Municipality the Biodiversity Facilitators and a group of high school learners embarked on a mapping excursion in Nieuwoudtville mapping rare and endangered species on municipal land and in road reserves.

In a subsequent presentation to the municipality the scholars presented the special species in a PowerPoint presentation indicating their geographical position to the entire municipal staff in Nieuwoudtville. A map indicating the especially vulnerable areas was handed over to the local municipality.

The positive reaction from the municipality and the subsequent protection of rare and endemic species has sparked the idea to repeat such monitoring exercises every year to document changes and to help protect rare and threatened plants within the village.

- **Signboards in town**

The Biodiversity Support Group has decided to put up signboards on municipal land, in the road reserve and the municipal reserves to indicate the scientific and common name of rare and endangered plants at the site where they occur. Funding has been received through Northern Cape Nature Conservation and the signboards will be placed in the coming flowering season.

- **HIV/AIDS film week**

Since the beginning of the project it was the aim of the Eco Club to gain the trust and respect of the various communities in Nieuwoudtville. This film festival was held because of the recognition that the Eco Club has received from the community as many people have come to trust the biodiversity facilitators.

A series of documentary movies by Lawrence Dworkin about HIV/AIDS were used for the movie festival week on the 12-15 September 2005. This film festival was held because of the recognition that the Eco Club has received from the community as a source of information.

This movie week was run by the two biodiversity facilitators and was a great success. The first three days were set aside for the High School participants and the last two days were for learners from junior school.

“Many children were involved and found it very interesting and exciting. These five days were also very rewarding for the Biodiversity facilitators, as they could see the need that the youth has, to gain more information and the need for such activities.” Lu Anne De Beer, Biodiversity Facilitator

• **Cape Conference**

On the 7th and 8th of June the biodiversity facilitators went to Kirstenbosch to take part in the C.A.P.E Partners' Conference 2005. The objective of C.A.P.E is to secure the conservation of the biodiversity in the Cape Floral Kingdom and through this to deliver sustainable economic benefits to the people of the region. The two days that were spent in Kirstenbosch was an important and positive experience and a wonderful way to interact with a great diversity of people. This conference encouraged presenters to use creative ways of conveying their message and experiences.

The Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Group was officially recognized as the best presentation and during the award ceremony the Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Group was also recognized by C.A.P.E as a committed partner in facilitating learning partnerships for conservation.

• **Storytelling**

During the Nieuwoudtville Design Charette, a story telling workshop was held to ensure that local knowledge about plants and historical events, but also the local culture could be captured in stories.

The content of this book consists of stories told by locals, both in town and on the farms surrounding Nieuwoudtville. These are stories about medicinal plants, pre-existing water pools, different cultures, various plant species, historical buildings and sites.

Both biodiversity facilitators are also working on capturing more stories from local people to maintain this local cultural heritage. Publication of the booklet is anticipated in 2006.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An important aspect of the project is to monitor and reflect on activities and progress. The Biodiversity Support Group plays an important role in being a sounding board and providing guidance to the project. Reflection and field reports help the biodiversity facilitators to learn and improve on activities in the process.

Planned next steps

- Regular excursions with school children to Nature Reserves and local farms
- Placing of signboards in town
- Ongoing environmental movies which will be shown at the Indigo Workshop space

- Planning and lay out of the resource centre at the Nieuwoudtville Wild Flower Reserve
- Planning of the Eco Club vegetable garden
- Publishing of the Nieuwoudtville book
- Publishing of the Eco Club newsletter
- Planning for the Winter School that will be held in July 2006
- Planning of creative environmental projects

Concluding remarks

The Nieuwoudtville Biodiversity Facilitators Project had a significant local impact on awareness raising in the area and has managed to create a creative and safe space for children and adults to explore, appreciate and protect their rich natural heritage in the area. It has touched many lives and has become an important local institution that will remain active beyond the lifespan of the SKEP project.

The members of the Biodiversity Support Group and INDIGO development & change would like to express their sincere appreciation to CEPF for making this possible through SKEP funding.

Information Sharing

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes XXX

No

If yes, please also complete the following:

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Overall Financial Report

Budget items	2004	2005	Budget **	Balance ZAR	USD*
Outings travel	R 2,624.20	R 27,475.87	R 29,315.00	-R 785.07	-\$120.20
Computer	R 8,338.86	R 1,600.00	R 10,000.00	R 61.14	\$9.36
Educational Videos	R 199.95	R 290.00	R 500.00	R 10.05	\$1.54
Educational Books	R 762.00	R 1,092.46	R 2,000.00	R 145.54	\$22.28
stationary	R 2,951.47	R 2,905.79	R 6,000.00	R 142.74	\$21.85
Digital Camera	R 1,380.91	R 400.00	R 2,000.00	R 219.09	\$33.54
Nursery equipment	R 0.00	R 848.00	R 1,000.00	R 152.00	\$23.27
insurance	R 0.00	R 500.00	R 500.00	R 0.00	\$0.00
Office space	R 5,362.96	R 1,678.95	R 7,000.00	-R 41.91	-\$6.42
Admin fee	R 7,000.00	R 0.00	R 7,000.00	R 0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL				-R 96.42	-\$14.76

* This amount is for reference purpose only and has been taken as the conversion rate on receipt on the funds: 1 USD =

R 6.53150

** The budget has been adjusted to reflect the actual amount received in ZAR. The difference of R 4,685.00 is due to the relevant exchange rate at the time. R 65,315.00 was received on 16 March 2004.