

RURAL REVIVE



In A Nutshell

RuralRevive – Building a Desert-Based Economy is a project conceptualized under Wolwedans Vision 2030 – The AridEden Project, a sustainability framework that encapsulates Wolwedans' sustainability journey ahead. Underpinned by a philosophy of balancing people, planet, and profit, it aims at building resilient and thus more sustainable and equitable tourism/conservation economies based on 5 core pillars: Commerce | Community | Conservation | Culture | Consciousness.

RuralRevive has overcome challenges and made significant progress in achieving its objectives by establishing a foundation for a holistic economic concept that benefits local communities in the Namib Desert and extends beyond Wolwedans. The primary goal of RuralRevive is to revitalize Maltahöhe and its people through a diversified local economy, creating sustainable entrepreneurial and employment opportunities while addressing supply chain gaps and supporting underprivileged individuals in the area.

The Laundry

RuralRevive is currently setting up a large-scale laundry operation in Maltahöhe to cater to the wider tourism sector in the Daweb Constituency. This state-of-the-art laundry facility incorporates a 50-kW solar installation, ensuring energy independence, and a wastewater recycling facility to enhance sustainable operations in the arid environment. As part of our commitment to local empowerment, the laundry facility has already been inaugurated during the RuralRevive One-Year Anniversary. In addition, nine laundry ladies have received training in eco-friendly practices, equipping them with the necessary skills for their roles. This initiative has also resulted in two individuals securing full-time employment, promoting economic empowerment within the community.

Horticulture

RuralRevive is actively establishing greenhouses and irrigation systems in Maltahöhe and surrounding areas to produce organic staple vegetables for the local market and tourism industry. As part of their commitment to community development, they have conducted a questionnaire survey addressing issues such as limited water access, extreme weather conditions, lack of skills, and financial constraints. In response to the community's desire for an open farmer's market and vocational education for youth, RuralRevive has set up a demonstration training site featuring main greenhouses, organic materials collection, and a permaculture garden. They have also conducted training sessions in partnership with GIZ-Farming for Resilience (F4R) and engaged schools to incorporate horticulture into the curriculum. Additionally, the project organized an intensive horticulture training program during the Organic Gardening Christmas Training, fostering self-sufficiency, enhancing food security, and creating entrepreneurial opportunities. As a testament to the success of the program, three trainees have secured full employment at Wolwedans, RuralRevive campus, and F4R.

The Barn

The Barn in Maltahöhe serves as a distribution hub for local farmers and small producers, offering a range of fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables, processed meat products, eggs, and cheese. RuralRevive is organising regular open markets connecting local producers with consumers, laying the groundwork for establishing a robust supply chain for The Barn.

These open markets have not only supported local businesses, artisans, and showcased the vibrant culture of Maltahöhe but have also highlighted the importance of supporting local farmers and fostering community bonds. Looking ahead, there are plans to explore the possibility of establishing a coffee shop at The Barn, creating a central meeting space for producers and tourists to foster networking and collaboration.

Desert Runner

A transport service to tourism enterprises in the Sossusvlei and NamibRand regions plays a crucial role in the success of the holistic concept. Desert Runner, a scheduled transport solution, ensures the reliable delivery and collection of laundry, fresh produce, waste, and people, effectively connecting all the necessary dots. To ensure cost-effectiveness and maximize participation, the transport service operates under the RuralRevive Project umbrella as a non-profit service, keeping costs at a minimum.

The development of routes and the inclusion of a specific number of tourism establishments in the Greater-Sossusvlei Namib Landscape (GSNL) further solidifies the implementation of Desert Runner, which will run from Monday to Friday. RuralRevive emphasizes the importance of providing good value for money, as this will be the primary motivator to bring stakeholders on board. It is essential that the project makes economic sense to ensure the success of RuralRevive.

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RuralRevive – Building a Desert Based Economy is a project conceptualised under *Wolwedans Vision 2030 – The AridEden Project* – and driven by the Wolwedans Foundation until the project is ready to become an independent Section 21 “Association not for Gain” with the aim, to create a platform for more stakeholders to come on board.

It is implemented by the Wolwedans Foundation and co-funded by the Social Security Commission of the Republic of Namibia and the Wealth Inequality Initiative of the Julius Bär Foundation.

Community-driven Waste Management System

To achieve a significant reduction in landfill and landscape pollution in Maltahöhe and the surrounding region, RuralRevive promotes an integrated and collective approach to waste management, considering waste as a valuable resource. The project has initiated the process of setting up a community-driven waste management system through engagements with the Roads Construction Company and Rent-A-drum. This initiative aims to promote environmental sustainability by implementing the "Trash-to-Treasure" concept, which supports reusing and repurposing waste while providing market access platforms for these products. By creating livelihood opportunities and actively keeping waste out of the waste stream, RuralRevive ensures a cleaner and healthier living environment in Maltahöhe and the Daweb Constituency.

EconoMix

EconoMix serves as a transformative, entry-level business management program within RuralRevive, offering participants essential business skills to pursue their career aspirations and transform them into financially viable livelihoods. The program covers various aspects, including financial intelligence, costing, procurement, HR and admin, negotiation skills, and marketing. Through EconoMix, participants are equipped with the necessary tools to take charge of their own destiny and become empowered entrepreneurs. The program has already conducted a workshop engaging five women and two men in collaborative learning and discussions, providing them with start-up capital and ongoing guidance to support their entrepreneurial journey. Participants are expected to present their business results by November 2023, fostering accountability and creating opportunities for reinvestment. Mentorship opportunities have also been identified to further support emerging entrepreneurs and encourage collaboration within the RuralRevive community.

Enterprise Diversification & Development

Future enterprise diversification and development opportunities will be explored as they arise. As RuralRevive takes hold and builds momentum, additional stakeholders will see merit in coming on board.

New and complementary business ventures will naturally evolve in the region, ranging from diversified services and value-add production to manufacturing and retail. Eventually, the vision is for Maltahöhe to become a thriving business hub again, creating jobs and sustaining livelihoods.

Replicability

RuralRevive is intended as a concept blueprint for transparent and replicable economic revitalisation of communities across the country and perhaps even the continent. This is achieved by identifying entry level opportunities that can serve as the foundation for future economic development, building capacity in relevant, key areas, and ensuring that there is a linkage with existing market demand.

RuralRevive wants to demonstrate that through simple and accessible activities, change can begin, lives improve, wealth inequality diminish, and improved well-being be sustained.

By integrating the five pillars of commerce, community, conservation, culture, and consciousness, it provides an innovative, holistic approach to addressing wealth inequality.

