

JOJOBA NAMIBIA



12

hectares of desert will be transformed into plantations

12,000

jojoba plants will be planted

70

or more people will initially benefit from the project

10

farmers will transition from subsistence farming to having a stake in livelihood-building commercial farming

Transferring farming knowledge to fight inequality

Led by Oliver Rust and other members, Namib Desert Jojoba Oil Producers CC (NDJ) have successfully farmed Jojoba plants in Swakopmund, Namibia, since 2014. In this time, they have found profitable markets for the oil in Europe, particularly among cosmetics makers. These customers have praised the extraordinary quality of NDJ's oil. Its quality derives from the unique mineral content and suitability of Namibian soil, and the fact that the seeds are hand-picked, sorted, and pressed.

To carry out this labour-intensive process, NDJ's management works with historically marginalised people who have struggled to climb above plantation labour to become owners and entrepreneurs in their own right. NDJ's management has a vision (and passion) to enable marginalised communities and individuals to grow Jojoba and become independent Jojoba farmers.

In the project's first three-year phase, 12,000 Jojoba cuttings will be planted on 12 hectares (ha) of land. In this time, NDJ staff and Rosa Smit will share their expertise with identified team members. The participants will learn to nurture Jojoba plants to maturity, producing a first batch of seeds that can be pressed into oil. They will also learn business skills, such as bookkeeping, marketing, management, and "eco"-certification.

What is more, the project beneficiaries will be introduced to potential clients in Europe who have already expressed interest in Namibian Jojoba oil. Ideally, the new farmers will then be equipped to market their raw material internationally. Looking even further ahead, the local chief has already expressed interest in granting 1,000 ha of land to scale up the project, depending on the success of the initial three-year phase. Based on the Julius Baer Foundation's interest in supporting initiatives that challenge wealth inequality,



Julius Baer Foundation-Germany

The Julius Baer Foundation-Germany was established by Bank Julius Baer in Frankfurt in 2019 to send a positive message, as a private bank, regarding social responsibility in Germany. As the second grant-making entity of the Julius Baer Group, it draws upon the expertise of the Julius Baer Foundation, established in 1965 in Zürich. The Julius Baer Foundation-Germany focuses on three core areas: supporting vocational training, reducing inequalities of wealth and opportunity, and developing sustainable alternatives to plastics. In addition, the Foundation shares its managerial best practices with other charitable organisations and offers philanthropic advising to Bank clients.

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we have proposed a funding partnership to provide approximately CHF 330,000 over three years to build the Jojoba for Namibia project.

Building on land reforms

Since 1990, one of the core challenges to Namibia's transition from colonial rule has been land distribution. Despite land redistribution efforts aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, much of Namibia's most productive land remains privately owned by historically privileged individuals.

Current land reform efforts also focus on distribution and registration of communal land, which accounts for almost 40% of Namibia's territory. This land is state-owned, but administered by traditional chiefs. The registration process involves demarcating and titling sections of land that are not commercially or privately owned. With approval of the local chief, land rights are registered to families or individuals, both women and men.

Registration of communal land to locals who have never had such rights offers opportunities for development. But challenges remain. Many locals wish to use their land for productive agriculture, including crop growing and livestock keeping. Yet they often only have experience with subsistence farming in Namibia's dry climate, and they struggle to compete with the bigger commercial farmers. Crop failure, overgrazing, and productivity loss are common.

This is why Jojoba for Namibia bears promise to address wealth inequality in the country. The Jojoba plant is one of the few resilient commercial crops that can thrive in the local desert conditions, and our training of new land owners can enable them to use their plots efficiently as a source of income. They can produce an oil that is in high demand in the cosmetics industry. In this way, Jojoba has the potential to transform the livelihoods of some of Namibia's marginalised citizens.

Facts and figures: Namibia

- Namibia has a population of over 2.5 million. Around 30% of the population is unemployed and approximately 27% lives below the poverty line.
- Almost three decades after achieving independence, Namibia remains a divided country suffering from high levels of poverty and inequality.
- Namibia is the second-most unequal country in the world, after South Africa, based on the Gini coefficient.
- The Palma ratio, which depicts inequality in terms of the gap between a country's richest 10% and its poorest 40%, also rates Namibia low. Accordingly, it has the fourth-largest wealth gap after Botswana, Haiti, and South Africa.
- Key economic sectors are mining, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture, with over 50% of the population depending on substance farming.

For more information about Namib Desert Jojoba Oil Producers CC, please visit: www.namibdesertjojoba.com

“Our socio-ecological project in Namibia primarily supports women in rural areas in the development and sustainable management of profitable jojoba plantations aimed at fairer distribution of wealth.”

Oliver Rust, Manager at Namib Desert Jojoba