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Geo-Education made easy through debating



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Every year all museums and heritage institutions in Namibia celebrate the Heritage Week in order for the public to reconnect with their cultural and natural heritage. The theme for the Heritage Week in 2015 was “Preserving today for tomorrow, Embracing our heritage through dialogue”. As part of Heritage celebrations, the National Earth Science Museum at the Geological Survey of Namibia hosted a debate on climate change for eight grade seven primary school groups from the capital city, Windhoek. The purpose of the climate debate was to increase awareness on climate change, its impact on communities and the difference the youth can make to combat climate change.

Seven of the participating schools were public, while only one school was private. Each group consisted of six to seven pupils and their class teacher. The debating teams were judged by three geoscientists from the Ministry of Mines and Energy based on the following criteria: organization and clarity of responses, use of arguments to support viewpoint, use of examples and facts to support reasons given, presentation style, e.g. tone of voice, use of gestures, and level of enthusiasm, and finally the strength of the answer. The winning school received an all-expenses paid trip to the Gobabeb Research Station in the Namib Desert world heritage site and all schools received educational books for the school libraries. In addition, the top three pupils each received a prize for being enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The climate change debate received positive feedback from the teachers and pupils, although most of them had never debated before and they learnt from other groups during the debates. Pupils considered the debate as a more fun way to learn about the various aspects of climate change rather than conventional class teaching, where little interaction takes place between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. The verdict by all pupils and teachers was that our museum should host a debating event annually.

