

Kunene Elephant Education Center



Construction and Education Initiative – Project Concept Note

Location Kunene Region, Northwestern Namibia	Project Lead Dr. Frank Schmielewsk and local conservation partners	Target Opening Within 9 months of full funding
Construction Quote N\$ 1,539,786 incl. VAT	Estimated Funding Need Approx. USD 89,700 incl. construction and educational setup	Focus Education, Communities, Coexistence, Sustainability

Project Overview

The Kunene Region of northwestern Namibia is home to one of the world's last populations of free-ranging desert-adapted elephants. While these elephants represent a unique conservation success story, increasing pressure on natural resources and limited access to environmental education continue to create challenges for both local communities and wildlife.

The Kunene Elephant Education Center is designed to become a permanent hub for conservation education, community engagement, and human-elephant coexistence. Located in Oromakupa Village, the center will provide educational opportunities for schoolchildren, local residents, conservancy members, and visitors.

The first phase includes a dining hall, computer laboratory, kitchen, ablution facilities, and supporting infrastructure. The center will operate as a model of sustainable development.

Project Objectives

Strengthen conservation education

Provide children, youth, teachers, and community members with accessible, locally relevant learning opportunities about desert elephants, ecosystems, water, biodiversity, and responsible stewardship.

Promote human-elephant coexistence

Improve understanding of elephant behavior, risk reduction, conflict prevention, and practical coexistence strategies that protect both community livelihoods and wildlife.

Support community participation

Create a shared space, where conservancies, traditional authorities, schools, community members, and conservation partners can meet, learn, exchange knowledge, and develop locally grounded solutions.

Build long-term educational infrastructure

Establish a dedicated facility that can host school groups, workshops, digital learning, exhibits, visitor education, and outreach activities over many years.

Demonstrate sustainability

Integrate solar-powered systems, water infrastructure, and durable construction methods to show how education, conservation, and sustainable development can reinforce one another.

Construction Scope and Key Components

The current quotation covers the first major construction phase for the Kunene Elephant Education Center at the Elephant Rangers Camp site. The scope includes the core building and essential service infrastructure needed to start operating as an education and community training facility.

Component Description	Description
Core Building Dining hall	Computer laboratory, kitchen, ablution block, walls, roof, ceiling, doors, windows, tiling, plastering, painting and finishes
Water & Sanitation	Septic tank, ablution plumbing, water tank, water connection accessories and roof gutters
Sustainability	Solar geyser system and water-related infrastructure as a first step toward resilient, low-impact operations
Access & Site Works	Ramp, landing strip, veranda rails, kerbs/paving and exterior works
Operations Support	Storage capacity, food supplies, teaching materials, equipment and logistical support for programs

Budget Based on Construction Quotation

The following budget incorporates the submitted quotation for the new construction at Elephant Rangers Camp. Amounts in Namibian dollars are based on the quotation. USD figures are indicative planning equivalents using an assumed exchange rate of N\$18.50 = USD 1. Final USD amounts should be adjusted at the time of grant submission or transfer.

Budget line	N\$	USD approx.
Main building construction subtotal	1,094,201.74	59,146
Septic tank construction	15,015.96	812
Water infrastructure	7,046.41	381
Solar geyser system	9,500.00	514
Transport and logistics	33,180.00	1,793
Labour	180,000.00	9,730
Subtotal excluding VAT	1,338,944.11	72,375
VAT	200,841.62	10,856
Grand total - construction quotation	1,539,785.73	83,232
Educational setup, exhibits, teaching materials and project administration		6,468
Estimated total funding requirement		89,700

Implementation Timeline

The project is planned for implementation within nine months of securing full project funding. The first phase is intentionally designed as a four-month preparation period to allow sufficient time for approvals, final planning, contracting, procurement, and reliable budget control.

Phase	Timeline	Main Activities	Milestone
Phase 1	Months 1-4	Secure final approvals and land-use agreements; architectural plans and cost estimates; confirm funding commitments; complete procurement and contractor selection.	Ready for construction
Phase 2	Months 5-7	Construct the education center; build core facilities; complete external works; install water, sanitation and solar infrastructure.	Building and infrastructure completed
Phase 3	Month 8	Furnish classrooms and accommodation units; install educational exhibits and learning materials; recruit and train local facilitators.	Center ready for programs
Phase 4	Month 9	Launch school and community outreach programs; hold official opening; begin regular environmental education activities.	Operational launch

Expected Impact

The Kunene Elephant Education Center will create a permanent platform for conservation education in a region where knowledge, trust, and practical coexistence are essential for the future of desert-adapted elephants. By reaching children and youth early, the project will help shape a generation that understands the value of wildlife and sees conservation as part of its own future. For local communities, the center will provide a place for dialogue, training, and practical learning. Programs will focus on reducing fear and conflict, strengthening awareness of safe coexistence strategies, and supporting community-led approaches that protect both people and elephants. The center can also strengthen local pride in Namibia's natural heritage and create new opportunities for education, visitor engagement, and conservation-related livelihoods.

For conservation partners and funders, the center will provide a visible, accountable, and locally rooted investment in long-term elephant protection. Its impact will not be limited to a single training event or campaign; it will create infrastructure through which education, outreach, and community engagement can continue year after year.

Expected long-term outcomes	Indicative measures
Improved conservation awareness	Number of students, teachers and community members reached annually
Reduced human-elephant conflict risk	Number of coexistence workshops, outreach events and participating communities
Stronger local stewardship	Involvement of conservancies, traditional authorities, schools and local facilitators
Sustainable education infrastructure	Operational use of classroom, computer lab, exhibits, water and solar systems

Contact

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*Images in this concept note include a concept visualization of the proposed center and documentary wildlife photography for project communication purposes.