

IGCP project 587 – research for educational resources

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My attendance of the field conference in Namibia offered a detailed insight to the work carried out for the IGCP project 587. This on site research through participation of field work, interaction with project members and photographic documentation has offered an excellent base for educational resources for students and teachers. The educational material developed from this particular research will not be directly linked to school curriculum, but will be presented as extracurricular and will be available online, so that it may be available and appeal to a vastly wide range of learners in age and throughout the world.

The main aim of this resource is to introduce the Precambrian fossils unique to Southern Namibia as providing possible explanation to the history of the evolution of life on Earth, to students and teachers in primary and secondary school, along with active learners in the global community.

This virtual tour of a selection of field sites at Farm Aar will provide learners with an introduction to a Precambrian environment and how this is understood by geologists based on current evidence. This will lead to an examination of the Precambrian fossils found at Farm Aar in Southern Namibia in order to highlight the differences between these Nama fossils and the Ediacaran fossils found in South Australia and Russia.

The biological focus will be on three of the most common fossils found in the region that we personally observed in the field. *Pteridinium*, *ernietta* and *rangea* specimens were documented in photographs whilst interviews and excavation practices were recorded on video to allow the experience to be shared by learners online. Details of the proposed structure of these three species will be described, as will the continuing uncertainty in their classification. Other details in our experiences to be shared include, who is currently working on these sites, what their specific research is, what research practices are undertaken on site, and how ideas related to the behaviour and habitat of each species originate through such research.

Further information related to the current flora and fauna of the region, along with a cultural history was documented in rock art, rock etchings and evidence of German outposts. This provides a historical context for the discovery of the Nama fossils.

Significant work needs to be completed in order to translate such recent and complex research into a format and language that is understood and appreciated by individuals who do not have extensive background in geology or palaeontology. The result however will be an incredibly unique resource for which there is currently nothing similar that is so easily available.

This online resource may also be downloaded as a booklet and used on site by visitors to Farm Aar in conjunction with on site exhibitions and marked tours.