



Photos: Tanja Bause

**SHOWING OFF ...** Matha Neshuku with the different shapes and sizes of soap produced by the Katutura Soap Project.

# Local soap for local tourism

## • TANJA BAUSE

THE Katutura Soap Project was started by Maarika Hoppula and Simona Mosimann in 2009 in Katutura to help HIV-positive women earn an income.

The two women learned everything they could about the soap-making process and then trained four other women.

To make the soap they use only pure Namibian olive oil sourced from Rùheleben Estate in Swakopmund, water and caustic soda.

The soap is left for a month so that the caustic soda can evaporate, as it is only used to start the soap-making process.

“Our soaps are 100 per cent Namibian and 100 per cent natural,” says Hoppula.

In their search for an ingredient that would make the soaps even more Namibian, the women have experimented with different herbs and in the end found mahangu to be the perfect ingredient.

They now produce mahangu



**FINAL TOUCHES ...** Loide Ivaalukeru ties a ribbon around the finished product.

soap that is used as a scrub due to the fine mahangu granules it contains.

All the soaps are made without any preservatives or fragrances so that they are an environment- and skin- friendly product.

The Katutura Soap Project

has now added small soaps for the hospitality industry to their production line.

Eight lodges and guesthouses are now providing their visitors with this Namibian soap.

“If more guesthouses would support us we could expand and give employment to more women,” says Hoppula.

The soaps are already gaining in popularity and the women’s income has increased.

To make a single soap takes a whole month. During this time the women prepare the containers for packaging. These are made from recycled plastic bottles received from Paul’s Coffee Shop and other restaurants in Windhoek.

The soaps are available in different sizes at the Craft Centre, Mount Sinai Centre in Katutura and occasionally at the Bio Market in Umland Street. People wanting to place orders can do so by sending e-mail to [katururasoap@gmail.com](mailto:katururasoap@gmail.com).