



Sawubona

Report on St. Mary's visit to South Africa July 2013

@BambisananiPart



Sawubona

Report on St. Mary's visit to South Africa July 2013



Bambisanani
Partnership

Over the past seven years St. Mary's Menston has developed a unique partnership with a school in one of South Africa's poorest rural areas. This summer, fourteen Sixth Form students, three members of staff and a business sponsor, visited Mnyakanya School in the deprived Nkandla region of Kwa Zulu Natal to develop the collaborative work between the two schools and wider community, which is referred to as the Bambisanani Partnership (Bambisanani being the Zulu word for 'working hand in hand'). The Bambisanani Partnership uses sport as a catalyst to promote education, leadership, health and global understanding.

This visit was led by Assistant Headteacher and founder of the partnership David Geldart, supported by Martin Green and Amanda Murphy from St. Mary's and Kevin Emsley, Chairman of law firm Lupton, Fawcett, Lee and Priestley. The students were: Elizabeth Banks, Ryan Clarke, Kavindu Appuhamy, Patrick Connolly, Emily Fieldhouse, Elizabeth Garnett, Michael Jones, Freya O'Connor, Jade Rigby-Williams, James Riley, Hannah

Smith, Chloe Tindale, Madeline Tysoe and Charles Walker.

The Nkandla region is in the heart of Zululand and is extremely deprived with 90% unemployment, 60% adult illiteracy and one of the highest HIV/Aids rates in the world with one in three adults infected. Mnyakanya School is relatively poorly resourced with classes of sixty plus. Yet despite this, the school offers an oasis of hope for which many students walk two hours to attend.



An important aspect of this year's visit was to develop a relationship with the well-resourced and highly successful Eshowe High School, situated approximately an hour away from Mnyakanya. To that end, four students from Eshowe were invited to join the Bambisanani Leadership Programme for the week with St. Mary's and Mnyakanya students. Nobantu Zondi, Sphehile Zungu,

Mangaliso Tembe and Prince Heahector consequently joined the team and added significantly to the project.

During the visit, St. Mary's students, supported by Eshowe students, mentored twenty Mnyakanya students through the Bambisanani Leadership Course. An aspect of the course was for students from all three schools to jointly organise and deliver a cricket and rugby themed Sports Festival and a Reading Festival for ninety two children from Ntolwane Primary School. These events, planned and delivered by students, were a remarkable success at every possible level.



The intention is that the young leaders from Mnyakanya will continue to work with Ntolwane and the other Primary Schools, thus building leadership capacity in the community. Earlier this year, previously trained Mnyakanya

leaders became the first in South Africa to gain the prestigious Diana Award for their outstanding work in the community, delivering an Aids Awareness Programme that they devised themselves.

Mnyakanya students valued the programme highly:

“It is important for South Africans to have connection with people from other countries – this is why the Bambisanani Partnership is so important. I have learned that we are all the same even though we have different skin colours. It is important to develop young leaders because older people in the community need help.

The partnership has taught me to lead and I am very proud of myself – it shows that I am improving as a person. I am more confident now and respectful; I want to carry on leading.”

Nokuthobeka Ngcobo

“The partnership is bringing two different countries together to share their strengths in order to learn. I have learned not to judge people but to encourage, share ideas and work together. This partnership is an example to other countries and it must continue. Bambisanani is needed all over the world.”

Msizi Nzuzo

“I have learned to help other people and I have learned that respect is everything. Through sport we have worked hand in hand –

we have different colour skin but it does not matter. I am a leader now and I want to help my community. I will say ‘Hello’ to people that are different to me now.”

Sifiso Shabalala



The impact of the experience on the Eshowe students was also interesting and significant.

“The Bambisanani Partnership is giving young people from the UK and South Africa the opportunity to become great leaders and understand the needs of others. It encourages young people to believe that they can be something. Bambisanani brings unity to the community. I have learned that you cannot work alone to be a good leader – you need a team. Bambisanani is a great team building partnership that is helping young people, schools and communities. May God bless this partnership.”

Mangaliso Tembe

“The Bambisanani Partnership is uniting teenagers of different colour across the

world to learn about other cultures. It is developing young people to be confident young leaders and role models. I have learned that one day I can lead any institution or even the country. My new British friends have taught me that I can be whatever I set out to be. This has been a once in a lifetime experience for me and I would not trade it for anything else. TEAM is about people working respectfully together – Bambisanani is the way forward.”

Nobuntu Zondi

Whilst at Mnyakanya, St. Mary’s students also taught a range of subjects and activities to students including: Maths, Science, History, Chess, Dance, Football, Rounders and Netball. The St. Mary’s team brought with them much needed equipment for Mnyakanya School including books for the Bambisanani Library (opened three years ago), and resources for art, science and sport. The final day culminated not only in the Festivals but also in a remarkable celebration event at



Mnyakanya. At this event the following twenty Mnyakanya students proudly received the Bambisanani Leadership Award in recognition of successfully completing the course: Bhengu Ntuthuko, Mncedisi Cwele, Sanelisiwe Dlamini, Thandokuhle Dlodla, Noxolo Dube, Celiwe Hadebe, Nokwethemba Magwaza, Siyabonga Mbambo, Menzi Mbambo, Nomcebo Mchunu, Ayanda Mkhize, Cebisile Mkhize, Nonkululeko Nala, Nokuthobeka Ngcobo, Banele Ntombela, Msizi Nzuzo, Sifiso Shabalala, Mluleki Sibiyi, Xolani Vilakazi, Sithembile Zuma.



A number of very special annual awards were also presented in memory of two young men that have died in recent years. Three years ago, Laurie McCauley from Otley sadly died. Laurie was passionate about sport and literature and his family donated two special awards in these areas to be presented annually at



Mnyakanya School to support the partnership. The awards are referred to as Laurie's Legacy and this year the Most Improved Footballer Award was won by Mbuyiseni Ndlovu and the Creative Writing Award by Hlengiwe Zuma. At the ceremony Mbuyiseni said *"It is a great honour to win this special award. Laurie's awards inspire learners at Mnyakanya. I am further inspired because I have won it."*

Another annual award was also presented in memory of Sbonelo Magwaza, a Mnyakanya student who also died three years ago. Sbonelo was an outstanding young leader who, a year before his death, had successfully completed the Bambisanani Leadership Award. In tribute to Sbonelo, each school now present an annual Sbonelo Magwaza Award for Outstanding Leadership. The award this year was won by Zinhle Zondi and presented by Sbonelo's uncle Bernard Mawaza who is the Security Guard and Football Coach at the school. At St. Marys, the award was won by Brogan O'Connor and was presented earlier in the year.

The St. Mary's team spent time working at the Zulufadder Orphanage Day Care Centre. Zulufadder is an organization that supports and cares for HIV/Aids orphans and vulnerable children throughout Kwa Zulu Natal. The St. Mary's team brought a range of equipment for the orphans and spent time singing, dancing, reading and playing sport with

the children as well as serving meals. They also met Zulufadder staff and volunteers including the incomparable Popi, a Zulu lady who has devoted her life to working with orphans. She is the Playschool Manager and is enthusiasm and devotion personified. Popi had a profound effect on the St. Mary's team causing them all to reflect on and discuss her significance as a genuine role model and inspiration,



compared to the so called celebrity role models that many people admire in the UK. The team were joined at Zulufadder by fellow St. Mary's students Joe Doonan and Daniel LeRoux. Joe had visited South Africa in 2012 as part of the St. Mary's group and was so inspired that he vowed to return as a volunteer at Zulufadder and in rural schools for three months before going to University. Daniel has family in South Africa and was keen to support the partnership by volunteering at Zulufadder, again before starting University.



Whilst in South Africa the St. Mary's group stayed in the town of Eshowe and there they learned more about Zulu life and South African history by visiting a Zulu cultural village, Eshowe Fort Museum and Arts Centre and the Eshowe Township. A great supporter of the Bambisanani Partnership is Durban



businessman, Logan Govender. Logan accompanied the group to Hlulhluwe Game Reserve to observe wildlife in its natural habitat. The group learned about the horrific practice of rhino poaching which will see the species wiped out within the next twenty years if not stopped. The visit also created the opportunity for the students to learn about man's influence on the natural environment, in particular climate change. Logan also accompanied the group in Durban to experience urban life in South Africa. The

differences in wealth and living conditions in the city – 'the haves and the have nots'. Whilst the group had gained a good understanding of rural deprivation in Zululand, this was their first experience of urban deprivation, albeit frequently close to urban wealth. The contrast certainly challenged students raising many issues for discussion.

The visit to South Africa clearly had a tremendous impact on the St. Mary's students:

"The willingness and passion of the children to learn was amazing as was their happiness. The happiness is incredible as so many of the children have really tough lives. The happiness and joy grew throughout the course and just goes to show that love and good can be developed in the most difficult of circumstances. It was a privilege to be part of this amazing project."

Michael Jones

"What I have learned is that the words 'I want to be your friend' are powerful enough to change the world. All it takes is two people meeting as equals and finding common ground

This is what the Bambisanani Partnership does."

Elizabeth Garnett

"The Bambisanani Partnership encapsulates the passion for learning that Zulu students have. Developing and inspiring young leaders is essential for the development of all societies. I am eager to return to South Africa and extend the Bambisanani legacy."

Ryan Clarke

"I cannot convey my sense of pride in watching the Mnyakanya students grow in confidence during the leadership course. Initially shy, introverted students were transformed into amazing inspirational leaders. There are lots of great things about this partnership but helping a community gain twenty confident leaders and knowing the impact this could have has shown me that small changes can make a big difference in the world."

Freya O'Connor

"All my expectations were exceeded; I have experienced so many things that will stay with me forever. I never stopped learning and smiling; it has made me think so much. I



am so grateful for the wonderful opportunity I was given.”

Chloe Tindale

“I never thought I would meet so many optimistic, loving and inspirational people. I have had an amazing time with twenty four young African leaders who have all developed since the start of the course: I feel so proud to know that I have been part of their development. The Bambisanani experience has had a profound impact on me and I am so grateful for the opportunity.”

Hannah Smith



“I didn’t realise how much pride I would feel when witnessing the students I mentored achieve more than they ever thought they could. I have gained more from their success than from my own.”

Elizabeth Banks

“I have encountered a wave of experiences which have genuinely refined my global perspective. Some of the people I have worked with have inspired me to open my mind and be courageous to achieve something extraordinary. I have had an education in life which is priceless; it will be pivotal for the rest of my life.”

Kavi Appuhamy

“The Bambisanani Partnership has had a dramatic impact on my outlook on life. We have witnessed people who suffer great poverty and sadness, but through all that we have seen hope and promise from those who will be the future of South Africa. It has been an honour to have a part in developing that future.”

James Riley



“Working in South Africa has highlighted the need not to waste any opportunity that might come

my way. Working with young leaders has inspired me; seeing their confidence grow made my pride skyrocket. I have learned so much helping others to learn.”

Madeline Tysoe

“The people I have met are so optimistic and seize every opportunity thrown at them. It has made me want to be a better person and taught me to make the most of my life.”

Jade Rigby-Williams

“During the week I learned so much about myself. I also learned how positive and full of life people can be even in bad situations. Zulufadder Orphanage was amazing with the inspirational leadership of Popi; it was such a happy and loving place. I also loved seeing my mentee, Nokxy blossom into a brave, understanding leader after being so timid to begin with. The Eshowe students were so welcoming with such positive attitudes; I want to be more like that on a daily basis.”

Emily Fieldhouse

“South Africa is a country and contrast and complexities; nothing is black or white. I have learned so much on this visit about inequality,



opportunity, trying to make a difference and the importance of developing young leaders. The Bambisanani Partnership is tackling some big issues with considerable success. I have been challenged and have learned so much.”

Patrick Connolly

“This has been the best experience of my life. I have never learned so much in such a short time. It has made me think about things that are important and things that are not important – sometimes we get our priorities wrong. I would like to return to South Africa.”

Charles Walker

For teachers to the partnership is a source of learning and inspiration:

“The St. Mary’s team communicated very well with my learners. For the learners they created a new picture about white people because before they were thinking that white people do not like black people. Our visitors showed humanity, they taught reading and the sports of cricket and rugby. They also taught the educators. Our friends have love; they always have a smile on their face. I wish they could be with us every day.”

Hlomisani Sikhakhne, Ntolwane Primary School

“Our two communities are sharing together and learning together. The partnership is helping us to face challenges – to face them and to solve them. The St. Mary’s team learn about Zulu culture and demonstrate the spirit of Ubuntu. We are having twenty young leaders each year

trained by the partnership – they use these skills in the community and are doing an amazing job. Our dreams come true with Bambisanani – it opens our mind to look far. Long live Bambisanani!”

Melusi Sikakane, Mnyakanya High School

“Students are brought together from different parts of the world and vastly different backgrounds. Facilitating learning experiences like this where young people succeed at creating something in the real world is what I most want to do as a teacher. What I took away is how people flourish and achieve when put in the right environment. As Einstein said ‘Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.’ It was wonderful to see how the students developed and expanded during the programme. If only there were more projects like Bambisanani that encourage young people to develop their real talents”

Mary Faragher, Eshowe High School

“The Bambisanani visit is an amazing adventure that is both heart-warming and thought provoking. We have all seen and experienced things that are indescribable to those who have not experienced them; all of which can change a person in a way that cannot be measured. Students from St. Mary’s, Eshowe and Mnyakanya have been challenged, inspired and developed a range of leadership qualities. Most of all they



have thoroughly enjoyed themselves forming friendships that will further develop the partnership. The partnership is going from strength to strength and long may that last.”

Amanda Murphy, St. Mary’s

“The positivity and genuine enthusiasm I witnessed amongst the students was truly inspiring. I have no doubt that all of these young people have the potential to achieve great things in their lives. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to share in their emergence as outstanding leaders.”

Martin Green, St. Mary’s

In recent years St. Mary’s have invited colleagues from partner schools and business sponsors to

join them in South Africa. Kevin Emsley joined the team for the 2013 visit and learned first-hand about the partnership that he has supported for several years.

“As a result of the visit, I was welcomed into the unfamiliar worlds of Education and South African culture. I had understood that the Bambisanani Partnership sought to achieve the development of future leaders in both continents. I have been privileged to have witnessed and participated in an event that I believe has achieved these objectives. A combination of energy, enthusiasm, spirit and willingness to learn under the assured guidance of an excellent and experienced teaching team created the practical experience of delivering major community events in a foreign country. It was done with humour, diligence, empathy and adaptability. It will change the lives of all those who participated and hopefully contribute to the skills and, more importantly, confidence of all involved to become excellent leaders of the future. For me it has been a huge pleasure, a great learning experience and I am humbly grateful to the teachers and students for allowing me to play a small part.”
Kevin Emsley

David Geldart was delighted with the visit: *“We had a fantastic team and I cannot praise them all enough for what they achieved. My colleagues Amanda, Martin and Kevin made the most wonderful and unique contributions and the students responded in ways that continually gives me faith in young people. Great*

credit is also due to my friends and colleagues at Mnyakanya School especially PK Zonde and Mazet Langa who did a remarkable job coordinating the visit. When I see the impact of our work on young people and adults in both countries outlined in this report, it is clear that despite many difficulties and frustrations we are making a real difference in some people’s lives. All those involved are changed in some small way and it is these small changes that ultimately make a difference. Those involved are challenged, tested and removed from their comfort zone; as a consequence they learn and grow, achieving things that they did not think possible. We have young people, teachers and schools working together for the common good: the very essence of Bambisanani and Ubuntu. Each group that goes to South Africa stands on the shoulders of those that have gone before; the expectation is to build on that platform and achieve more – the students from both countries did not disappoint and have taken the partnership to a new level this year. They have all achieved and the experience has given them a wider view of the world. I am looking forward to seeing what they do next. Special thanks must go to all our supporters for their outstanding contribution to this project.”

www.bambisananipartnership.com

Follow us on Twitter:
[@BambisananiPart](https://twitter.com/BambisananiPart)

Bambisanani Books

Google search for ‘**bambisanani partnership our books**’ to find out more and read in full online the three Bambisanani Partnership books which have been produced at St. Mary’s Menston:



Bambisanani: The First Five Years



Bambisanani 2012: Faster, Higher, Stronger



Bambisanani: The Power of Sport Art and Creative Writing Competitions based on 'The Power of Sport.'



bambisananipartnership.com



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
Nelson Mandela