

## Small Charity Massive Impact: The remarkable Bambisanani Partnership

A small UK charity run entirely by volunteers has gained an international reputation for its work in sport and education linking young people in the UK and South Africa. The Bambisanani Partnership has used the power of sport to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership to change lives in one of South Africa's most challenging regions. The partnership was founded 17 years ago by St. Mary's School in Leeds and Mnyakanya School situated in one of the most remote and deprived areas of KwaZulu-Natal. The charity has been invited to speak at conferences throughout the world about its inspirational work, not least at the *Global Sport for All Summit* at the Vatican. In 2023, the organisation was named as *International Sport and Physical Education Charity of the Year*.



### 2023: An outstanding year of activity and impact for the charity

2023 saw 4,007 young people from both countries involved in Bambisanani activities. 41 young people from four institutions (St. Marys School, Menston; University of

Leeds; Leeds Trinity University and Newcastle College) together with 11 members of staff volunteered in South Africa for a period of more than 3 months in total. This involved 33 different schools of which 17 were new to the programme.



In collaboration with Mnyakanya School and Rotary Clubs in South Africa and the UK, Computer Applications Technology (CAT) provision at Mnyakanya School has been dramatically improved with the school achieving specialised CAT status via assessment by the KZN Department of Education.



Mnyakanya School achieved its best ever examination results and recorded a significant increase in student enrolment citing the Bambisanani Partnership as an important factor in that success with particular reference to the ICT Suite and Water Installation Project provided by the charity.



The partnership's *Cycling to Success* initiative continued to expand and in July a significant partnership agreement was signed with KZN Cycling that will see more than 5,000 young people a year, from some of South Africa's most rural, remote and deprived areas how to ride and maintain bikes. 2,356 children have already participated in the programme.



The *Bambisanani International Athletics Challenge* expanded to include 15 schools from South Africa and the UK involving 335 students. Since this programme began 852 primary school children from both countries have participated in the initiative

15 Bambisanani Awards were presented at three South African schools recognising and rewarding achievement of students.

In partnership with the Jordan Sinnott Foundation annual awards were presented in South Africa encouraging sport and sports leadership in young people. Football shirts from the *Sinnott 25* campaign were distributed to children at Mnyakanya High School and Vumanhlamvu Primary School.





Two students from Mnyakanya School were awarded Bambisanani Partnership bursaries as a contribution towards their university fees. Both students are studying to become teachers at the University of South Africa.

Several national and international articles were published highlighting the impact of the charity.



Charity Founder and CEO, David Geldart gave a speech at the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia and also contributed to an international Global School Alliance webinar.



**Since the Bambisanani Partnership began a total of 16,703 young people have been involved in its various projects and programmes. Significantly this now includes students from primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities. Over the past three years the number of educational establishments involved in the work of the partnership has increased from 17 to 38.**

David Geldart, CEO and Founder of the partnership was full of praise for the Bambisanani team of volunteers and supporters 'who make all this happen':

**“Massive thanks to the Bambisanani team for the outstanding achievements in 2023. The impact on young people involved in our programmes has been quite remarkable not least in developing their world view and concept of humanity. The international recognition of our work and invitations to share ‘our story’ and experiences continue to both surprise and inspire us. Special thanks must go our wonderful sponsors and supporters – without their help none of the above would happen. We have taken a short breath to reflect on 2023 but our focus has already switched to 2024 and even more ambitious plans for the future - changing lives for the better through the power of education and sport. – working together and learning together.”**



## Looking Forward

The remarkable success and sustainability of the charity is based on a variety of factors but not least its commitment to the communities with which it works. Significantly, all programmes are based on needs identified by local communities and involve those same community members in delivery and evaluation. Another key feature of the charity's work is its absolute commitment to 'two-way learning' – providing collaborative learning opportunities for young people from both countries.

In the year ahead, the partnership will have four groups of student volunteers from the UK visiting South Africa to work on a variety of existing and new projects. The established Cycling and Athletics programmes will be extended to involve more schools and students. Leadership programmes will be expanded in both primary and secondary schools. A Bambisanani Award programme will be introduced in both UK and South African schools. More work will be done connecting UK and South African universities in the joint training of Physical Education and Sports Coaches. In collaboration with a number of agencies, work will begin to introduce Sport and Physical Education programmes at Thembinfundo Special School.



The work of this small charity is both impactful and inspirational; it is making a difference in the world. To use a sporting metaphor, long may it continue to punch well above its weight!

[www.bambisananipartnership.org](http://www.bambisananipartnership.org)

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