

# SHARED BIRTHDAYS –

## Bambisanani Partnership also Celebrates its Tenth Anniversary

David Geldart [afPE Honoured Member]

In 2006, as the then Director of PE and Sport at St Marys RC Sports College in Leeds, I visited South Africa as part of the British Council/Youth Sport Trust *Dreams and Teams* initiative. Ten years on, and as a direct result of that initial visit, I now have the privilege of leading the multi-award winning Bambisanani Partnership charity. The partnership has gained international acclaim for its work developing value-driven sport for its own sake but also, and significantly, for using sport as a catalyst to promote education, health, global citizenship, enterprise and leadership in one of South Africa's poorest regions.

From an initial meeting between two schools from very different parts of the world – St Mary's in Leeds and Mnyakanya School in rural KwaZulu Natal – the Bambisanani Partnership emerged and has grown into an exceptional international collaboration based on mutual respect and shared outcomes: *"Two school communities working together and learning*

*together"*. The Zulu word 'Bambisanani' literally means 'working hand in hand' and is a fitting name for the partnership. Very few international school links are sustained for as long or have the impact that the Bambisanani Partnership has had. I believe that this is down to the two school communities making an absolute and genuine commitment to global learning and to each other: *"The Bambisanani Partnership is not just embedded in both schools' communities it is part of our DNA now, part of who we are and what we believe in. This work is a constant reminder of our values, our purpose and the importance of interdependence."*

Annual exchange visits of teachers and students have had a most profound effect on all those involved.

St Mary's students:

*"My world has just got bigger, I realise it is my duty to be a global citizen."*

*"Much of our life in the UK has become obsessed with materialism and 'celebrity'. We have lost touch with things that really matter. My visit to South Africa has given me a much more meaningful perspective on life."*

Mnyakanya students:

*"We have worked together... people of different colours, countries, religions and cultures... we have proved it can be done."*

*"My view of the world has changed. I can now see what a difference it makes when you love and respect people."*

A key feature of the Bambisanani Partnership is the fact that, throughout the year, a range of learning activities take place to involve as many curriculum areas and students as possible. This is a major reason for the success of the programme.







Very few curriculum areas in either school have not harnessed the enormous interest in the Bambisanani Partnership as a catalyst for learning. Beyond PE and sport some remarkable work has also taken place in humanities, religious education, English, science, music and art. Students also have the opportunity to be involved in the Bambisanani Enterprise Programme (a student-led business to support the work of the partnership), the Bambisanani Award Programme and the Bambisanani Leadership Programme. Whilst not everyone

is able to go on the annual visit, everyone can be involved in something, whether they are a student or member of staff.

Last year I left my beloved St Mary's School to establish and lead the Bambisanani Partnership as a registered charity. This will enable us to make an even greater impact, as our supporters recognise.

**“** It is wonderful news that the Bambisanani Partnership has become a registered charity. For

the past ten years staff and students at St Mary's and Mnyakanya have worked tirelessly to create an amazing partnership that has used the power of sport to promote wider educational goals in a genuine international collaboration. Becoming a charity demonstrates the commitment of both schools to global learning which will now lead to further opportunities to involve more schools and young people in both countries in this inspirational work. **”**







Baroness Sue Campbell CBE, Chair of the Youth Sport Trust

**“** I am delighted that the Bambisanani Partnership has become a registered charity. This is further recognition for the hard work and commitment of all the staff and students who have been involved in the partnership, both at St Mary's and also Mnyakanya High School. We have been honoured to work with the Bambisanani Partnership over recent

years, helping shine the spotlight on over one hundred incredible young people who have selflessly dedicated their time to improving the lives of others in one of South Africa's poorest rural communities. We are delighted that the Partnership has been granted charitable status and we look forward to celebrating many more young people who continue in the footsteps of Diana, Princess of Wales. **”**

Tessy Ojo, CEO of the Diana Award



In its tenth anniversary year the Bambisanani Partnership has ambitious plans to extend its work and influence. In addition to the annual exchanges and the provision of a wide range of new learning activities in both schools, the charity is working with the University of Leeds to develop leadership programmes with its own students and to develop a unique cycling programme in KwaZulu Natal. At Mnyakanya School it is currently working with Intel and the KZN Department of Education to pioneer the installation of Wi-Fi and computers to enhance learning in remote rural schools. The partnership's long-term relationship with Zulufadder Orphanage will be developed through the building of a new hostel for vulnerable children. As Chair of the charity, I have also been invited by the South African High Commission to the UK to help establish a sport and education forum linking the UK and South Africa.

To celebrate and promote its work, the Bambisanani Partnership has published three remarkable books over the last nine years. To celebrate this tenth anniversary, we intend to complete a fourth: *Bambisanani: Ten Years of Working Together*. We hope other schools will look forward to this and be inspired to establish their own international partnerships.

To learn more about the Bambisanani Partnership visit: [www.bambisananipartnership.org](http://www.bambisananipartnership.org) or read our first three books:



- Bambisanani: The First Five Years, David Geldart, ISBN 978-0-9927124-1-9
- Bambisanani: 2012 Faster, Higher, Stronger, David Geldart, ISBN 978-0-9927124-2-6
- Bambisanani: The Power of Sport, David Geldart, ISBN 978-0-9927124-0-2

The Bambisanani Partnership also featured in previous editions of *Physical Education Matters*: Summer 2014 Vol.9, No.2 and Summer 2015 Vol.10, No.2. ■

**David Geldart is Founder and Chairman of the Bambisanani Partnership.**