

Outstanding year of volunteering



Students smile for a selfie



Bambisanani Partnership volunteers in 2023



Working together in South Africa



A team effort

FOLLOWING a break of three years due to Covid-19 restrictions, 2023 has proved to be a remarkable year of volunteering in South Africa for the Bambisanani Partnership.

Forty-one students, together with 11 members of staff from St Mary's School, Menston, University of Leeds, Leeds Trinity University and Newcastle College, spent more than three months in South Africa delivering existing Bambisanani programmes using sport to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership in one of the country's most deprived and challenging areas.

In four separate coordinated visits, the volunteers worked with 3,631 South African students from 33 different schools of which 17 were new partner institutions. A total of 3,151 students from primary and secondary schools were involved in sports festivals and coaching activities and 1,135 children experienced Bambisanani Leadership through Sport programmes.

The joint team of staff and students from the University of Leeds and Leeds Trinity University completed a four-week sport and education project. The Gryphons Abroad programme saw staff and students deployed to deliver cycling and sport and leadership in schools in the Nkandla region.

Through a pioneering collaboration between the charity and KZN Cycling, the team successfully engaged more than 2,000 young people in a cycling programme aimed at empowering young people. The Bambisanani/KZN Cycling project runs clinics in schools throughout the year via a permanent "cycling hub" positioned in the heart of the rural communities. The project aims to teach 5,000 young people a year how to ride and maintain bikes.

The final week of the university student stay was spent delivering a sport and leadership festival for four primary schools in the township of Eshowe.

The project was led by sport and physical activity staff members Andy Lockwood, Suzzi Garnett and Lauren Havercroft, along with Ammarah Pandor from Leeds Trinity. The six students were Connor Bull, Christian



A lesson

Lewis, Lucy Hughes, Rachel Barton, Rhiannah McCourt and Ellen Slack.

Newcastle College is the latest UK institution to join the Bambisanani Partnership. Led by former St Mary's, Menston student Brogan O'Connor, the college made its first visit to South Africa this year with student volunteers.

Operating at three schools; Matholamnyama Secondary School, Ngqamazana Primary School, Vumanhlamvu Primary School and the Zulufadder Doremi Daycare Centre for orphans and vulnerable children, the group worked with children aged two to 13, hosting sports and leadership sessions while supporting other projects, such as painting the daycare centre.

Working in partnership with local schools and organisations, the group delivered a

for the Bambisanani Partnership



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series of sports and sports leadership programmes to more than 700 South African students.

St Mary's School, Menston, have made two visits to South Africa this year involving 25 students.

A group of 15 Year 12 students and four staff, Catherine Chattoe, Charlotte Wood, Matt Harvey and David Farmer, deputy headteacher from St Joseph's Primary School in Pudsey, made the first visit to rural KwaZulu-Natal. The St Mary's student volunteers were Sean Billington, Joe Brooks, Ruby Grant, Oscar Thorning, Florence Greenhalgh, Lily Durkan, Andrew Diamond, Amy McLroy, Carys Delahay, Freddie Falkingham, Katie Newman, Tess Yeardeley, Ben Fletcher, Eleanor Rock and Louie Dooling.

The St Mary's students, together with support from students from all three high schools working together to plan, organise and deliver both a sports and a reading festival to students of Ntolwane Primary School.

In addition to the work at Mnyakanya High School, the team travelled to rural Nkandla where they organised an athletics festival for 11 local primary schools. The festival was such a success that it will now become an annual event with primary schools back in Yorkshire also participating in a parallel festival that will connect schools in both countries.

No St Mary's visit to KwaZulu-Natal would be complete without spending some time at the Doremi Daycare Centre where the student volunteers worked with the kindergarten learners on sports, literacy and singing.

The second St Mary's volunteer visit to

South Africa involved 10 Year 13 students: Rory Southern, Iggy Burrows, Charlotte Rawstron, Anna Ciesluk, Hannah Byrne, Daniel Sykes, Rebecca Shaw, Ruby Adcock, Lucy Charlton and Reya Wilks.

The group began their work at the remarkable Doremi Daycare Centre for orphans and vulnerable children. In addition to sports, reading and singing activities, the group organised a bear hunt and teddy bears picnic.

They went on to spend three days at Mnyakanya High School training another group of 30 sports leaders. This again culminated in both sports and reading festivals being provided for local primary school children.

A great highlight of this visit for everyone involved was another "first" for the Bambisanani Partnership - a visit to Thembindo Special School for children with a wide range of different disabilities. The team ran the school's first-ever sports day for the children, which included activities such as dancing, high jump and netball.

While in South Africa, the St Mary's team presented a range of Bambisanani annual awards at both Mnyakanya High School and Ntolwane Primary School.

St Mary's teacher Matt Harvey said: "Yet again we have been blown away by the possibilities that the Bambisanani Partnership offers young people in both countries. They really do have a good understanding of Ubuntu ("I am because you are") which will hopefully serve them well for the rest of their lives."

David Geldart, CEO and Founder of the partnership, said: "I have nothing but praise for the remarkable students and staff from St Mary's, Menston, the University of Leeds, Leeds Trinity University and Newcastle College for their outstanding work in not only reintroducing volunteer student visits to South Africa after Covid, but also for having such an enormous impact in doing so."

He added: "Massive thanks to our wonderful team from South Africa and the UK for making all this happen and making a difference."



Learning bike skills



Sports action