

Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Veterinary Science
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BITING BACK AGAINST RABIES

Ananthan Daylene, Luthaar Naidoo, Shanzelle Rabé,
Heiko Schmid & Laryssa Straub (BVSc III)

On 19 July 2018 we visited Jopie Fourie Primary School, where we held a short presentation for Grade 7 learners. The presentation was done as part of the requirement for the Veterinary Professional Life (VPL 300) module. The aim of the presentation was to teach the learners about the dangers of rabies and provide basic information on how to treat animals correctly to prevent dog bites.

The principal (Japie Venter) and teachers were very accommodating and gave us enough time to talk to the learners and interact with them. Our overall experience was that most of the learners were completely unaware of the dangers of rabies. With the help of the Global Alliance for Rabies (GAR) rabies booklets, we prepared a presentation about the dangers of rabies. We had volunteers from the class who were involved in our presentation, as we tried to engage with the learners as much as possible to keep their attention. It was clear that they enjoyed being involved and understood the information better. For example, we made them act as if a dog is attacking them and then taught them the correct method to keep from being bitten. We also used rabies booklets to make a poster which we left in



A group of veterinary science students visited Jopie Fourie Primary School to teach learners about rabies.

the school for every learner to look at and inform themselves about rabies.

At the end of each presentation, we asked them a few questions to see if they understood the important parts of the presentation. We also had a quick survey in every class, in which the pupils had to write down their feelings about rabies dogs before and after the presentation and we noticed that most of them did not know the dangers about rabies before. However, they were well informed about the disease afterwards. It was also clear that we changed their views on dog ownership and the responsibilities of owning a dog.

Overall, the community engagement project was a success and hopefully this helps in the future to form a better bond between the children and animals and prevent future dog bite incidents.



The learners were very responsive to the students' question and enjoyed the discussion.



DONATIONS: All donations received will be used for community engagement purposes, specifically in less fortunate communities. Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, blankets or your time:

Sr Sarah Johnson 012 529 8387 Small Animal Section Head and Referrals Co-ordinator sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

MY HLUVUKANI EXPERIENCE

Emca du Plessis (BVSc VI) & Dr Luke Arnot
(Lecturer: Department of Production Animals)
Photographs: Dr Luke Arnot

We came. We saw. We loved.

It has been 15 weeks since my Hluvukani adventure and I can recall every single moment as vividly as if it happened only yesterday. Acquaintances became friends, every morning became a game drive and if it was even possible, I fell in love with veterinary science even more. We were welcomed with open arms into the community, learnt their language, ate their food and treated their animals.

Our weekdays were packed with desperate animals and even more desperate farmers requiring veterinary care for their stock. Nothing can compare to the gratitude the community

members displayed at the end of each visit. That was what made my Hluvukani experience worth it! Please allow me to share a few highlights of those two weeks with you:

1. Having the amazing opportunity to assist veterinarians with darting a lion and performing a post mortem.
2. Competing with animal health technicians to see can vaccinate the most animals – I believe that they let us win!
3. Being chased by dystocia cows and having evidence of the event on video camera.
4. Endless braai evenings with only girls to organise the fire.
5. And many more.

It was truly a memorable adventure where I had the most fun. I also learnt quite a lot along the way. I would truly recommend that you try and visit this amazing setting even if you are not interested in rural practice. I would like to thank the Faculty of Veterinary Science and every single person that was responsible for making this a reality for veterinary students and I hope that we will be able to continue with this project for many more years to come.



Students helped veterinarians to dart a lion.



Practical experience is of great value in this profession

ADVENTURES WITH ELEPHANTS: GETTING CLUED UP ON CONSERVATION

Kira Coetzee, Simone Brown, Bruna Silva, Alexandra Graham & Rofhiwa Ramavhoya (BVSc III)

“Animals are like us humans; they can express love. There is no difference”.



Learners from Phagameng Secondary School visited Adventures with Elephants to learn more about these magnificent creatures.

This is a quote from one of the learners who took part in our community engagement project, which was a component of our module Veterinary Professional Life (VPL 300). Our group was allocated Phagameng Secondary School for our community engagement project and we were required to take the learners on educational tour to Adventures with Elephants. Adventures with Elephants is a wonderful game reserve which affords one the opportunity to interact with elephants. The purpose of the community engagement project was to teach the pupils about nature conservation, compassion for animals and educate them about rabies. Moreover, we wanted to teach the learners on how they can make a difference by leading a way of life that promotes the health of humans, animals and the environment.

We started out early on the chilly morning of 17 July 2018 to meet our school in person for the first time. The school was very welcoming and Ms Nthabiseng Lekota, the principal, was elated that we were giving the learners the opportunity to be involved in the community project. After introductions and a short discussion, we gave the eager learners booklets (n = 20) about rabies prevention. Although rabies prevention and education only formed one, but nevertheless essential, component of our attempt to show the learners what



The elephants kept everyone thoroughly amused with their antics. They memorised names, sprayed the learners with water and played soccer.

One Health is all about, the twenty “Want a friend? Be a Friend!” rabies booklets that were provided by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) were indispensable in helping us convey the rabies message to the learners in a fun and interactive manner. We had a delicious, wholesome lunch, which was sponsored by Pick ‘n Pay in Bela Bela, that we and the learners thoroughly enjoyed.

When the learners saw the elephants for

the first time, they were in awe. It was an unforgettable experience to touch and observe these magnificent animals up close. The elephants kept us enthralled by memorising names, spraying some learners with water and even playing some soccer! One of the learners exclaimed, “After today, I learnt that animals are not bad at all; who knew an elephant could kiss!” After that, we helped pick up litter along the road; thus instilling our message of keeping our environment healthy.

Overall, the excursion was a great success and the learners embraced the entire experience with enthusiasm. Their perspectives were transformed and their love for animals was enhanced.

Our group is grateful to have made a difference in these learners’ lives and we hope that this project can continue to educate school learners about One Health, rabies and conservation.

CONQUERING THE UNCONQUERED- HEALING ANIMALS WHILE SPREADING

LOVE

Kgopotso Mabote (Dip. Animal Health, Bsc Agric Animal Health [Hons] - NWU)

The Veterinary Student Community Outreach (VetSCO) has done it once again. They lent a lovely helping hand to those in need, touching the lives of those who are less fortunate, had already given up hope, and left them with huge smiles on their faces.

Saturday 26 May 2018, was a very cold morning, but nonetheless the adverse weather conditions could not stand in our way of completing our mission. At about 6h00 on the day, 36 students from the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria boarded a bus at the renowned Goat Pen. There were second-, third- and fourth-year BVSc students also there were first- and second- year veterinary nursing students.

The bus left at about 6h20 and headed to Makgabetlwane in North West. It was a 58 km journey and everyone was excited and yet somehow nervous because it was our first time ever hosting an outreach in the area. We arrived at about 7h15, found a few farmers waiting for us while others went to the field to get their animals from the fields to their respective camps.

While waiting for the farmers, students

were given a small brief and group leaders were assigned to smaller groups of students. The groups were divided according to the number of camps.

The camps were divided as follows:

1. Phase 1A: The group leader was Mr Tshebeletso Kutumela, a third-year BVSc student, member of the VetSCO committee, The camp had about 220 cattle.

2. Phase 1B: The group leader was Mr Khutso Chiloane, fourth-year BVSc student, VetSCO chairperson, The camp had about 320 cattle.
3. Phase 3A: The group leader was Mr Mothusiemang Julius Mentor, second-year BVSc student, qualified veterinary nurse. The camp had about 80 cattle.
4. Phase 3B: The group leader was Mr Kgopotso Mabote, second-year BVSc student, qualified animal health technician. The camp had about 480 cattle.
5. Mr Motaung Seakgwe's Camp: The Group leader was Ms Chantelle Van Jaarsveld, first-year veterinary nursing (UP) and animal health students from (UNISA). The camp had about 200 cattle.



The students and farmers were divided into smaller groups and given a final brief.

After the divisions into smaller groups, the students and farmers were given a final briefing by each respective group leader. It was an honour and much of a relief when Dr Sello Maboe came through and joined us. The groups departed to their assigned camps, the transportation was provided by the farmers on the back of their bakkies. Students were very happy, for some of it was the first time ever having to experience such an excursion. The animals were vaccinated against anthrax, botulism and black quarter.

Dr Maboe travelled between the camps, assessing the herd health status, giving advice to farmers and attending to some of the ailments the animals were presenting such as abscesses and wound care. He was also advising and helping some of the students on boosting their confidence and animal handling skills. He really did a brilliant job.

After all the animals had been attended to, everyone went back to the central meeting point. The farmers were so happy to such an extent that they went out of their way to organise a feast for everyone involved. We were treated to braai meat, pap and lots of cold drinks. It was indeed a great gesture by the farmers. Students were very happy, laughing and interacting with the farmers over a meal.

The festivities were now followed by the sad part of having to leave. We all gathered, and the farmers were so happy, they could not stop saying thanks. Committee members also had a chance to thank the farmers, students and Dr Maboe for his presence and expertise. The sitting was adjourned, and everyone had to go back to their respective homes.

VetSCO would like to extend their gratitude to the following parties:

- Dr Sello Maboe for sacrificing his time to come join us and make the day the huge success that it was.
- Dr Rebone Moerane and Dr Nenene Qekwane for their undying support towards our society and their mentorship.
- Mr Clement Timase Tlhwaele, the community leader, and his colleagues for welcoming us with open hands, trusting us with their animals, giving us their time and most importantly for going all out for us and organising a feast for us.
- Mr Jan Maime, animal health technician under the Moretele Municipality, for taking time out of his busy schedule and accompanying us during the pre-visit.
- Onderstepoort Biological Product for their generous sponsor of vaccines.

Thank you very much for the vaccines; they really helped us achieve our goal of reaching out and helping our rural farmers.

- TAKEALOT for their generous sponsor of merchandise such as gazebos, chairs and committee uniforms.
- CEVA for their continued support over the years. Thanks for making sure that our society always have funds. Your help really goes a long way towards making our society leave a mark on the lives of those who are on the receiving end during our outreaches.
- Finally, thanks to Grundling buses for their continued support and willingness to work with us every time we need transportation. Thanks for always providing us with quality service.



The animals were vaccinated against anthrax, botulism and black quarter.



A HIDDEN TREASURE

Regan van Welie, Lauren Wakefield, Ingo Meyer, Stephen Hodgson & Daniella van der Have (BVSc III)

A hidden treasure in the middle of Mamelodi; nothing else could really describe Meetse a Bophelo Primary School to a better degree.



The learners warmly welcomed the veterinary science students to their school and they were eager to learn more about rabies.

We started by visiting Meetse a Bophelo to get an idea of what we were going to have to deal with when implementing our outreach project. In all honesty, I think we were just a bunch of slightly intimidated and nervous students tasked with something that seemed very daunting to

us all in the beginning. Understanding rabies as a veterinary student is complicated enough, so we knew teaching it to primary school learners was going to be no easy task.

We arrived at Meetse a Bophelo primary

school for our day of teaching, only to be met by smiling faces and excited learners. It was too magical for words to be a spectator to the singing in their morning assembly, and the hospitality shown by all.

We then proceeded to taking a class one by one to try to get the message across to the learners in an understandable way. The learners were very enthusiastic and willing to learn and participate. We were using the rabies booklets (n = 55) sponsored by Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC). We believe wholeheartedly that without those booklets our lives would not have been as easy that day. With all the fun activities and stickers in the booklets, the learners were very eager to participate and were even happier to receive their own copy.

We ended every talk with a little game that we believed would reinforce some of our main messages and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Laughter and screams were the highlight and it was very tough to call it a day at the end. Meetse a Bophelo is definitely a diamond in the rough and a treasure to those lucky enough to cross paths with such a cute school.



Community engagement is a critical part of education for well-rounded veterinarians.

BAJABULILE: THE HAPPY PLACE

Kevasha Govender, Erin Sinclair & Sabelisiwe Mpanza (BVSc III)
Photography by: Laura Simpkins

Recently, Group 20 of the Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) 300 course went to Bajabulile Primary School in Mamelodi for their community engagement which was a great success.



The veterinary science students were touched by the warm welcome they received

Not only did we educate the learners about important matters like introducing them to rabies prevention, dog bite management and prevention, we also got a first-hand look at the communities we will be working in as qualified veterinarians. We were able to see just how little veterinary support the district received. This made us keen to return and teach the community, especially the children about the importance of animal welfare.

Many learners did not know anything about veterinary science and we felt that we have opened the door to a possible career choice. Bajabulile (which means happy people) did not disappoint us as they were welcoming and received us with open arms. Moreover, many learners in Grade 3 were able to speak English fluently so there was no language barrier. The learners were eager and enthusiastic to learn and were in awe of the activity booklets (n = 65) which were kindly sponsored by Global Alliance of Rabies Control (GARC). They especially loved that each of them received a certificate.

From the presentation we could see that many learners genuinely cared for their dogs. They had so much respect and we believe that no matter how small, we made a difference and left our mark on the school. Our group was really touched by the learners and staff members of Bajabulile Primary School, who warmed our hearts and made us feel purposeful. We are so grateful and humbled for this experience and would like to thank GARC for making this possible with their contribution.



The learners were impressed by the rabies booklets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjjean Project	Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Mnisi Community Project	Hluvukani	Mondays to Fridays



Visit the University of Pretoria Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates about community project opportunities.