THIS IS WHY

You think with the amount of sleep one gets before a road trip, one would be passed out in the car for the seven-odd hours’ drive, while occasionally sight-seeing petrol stations and vast land speckled with cattle.

What our eyes witnessed meandering through the most beautiful Mpumalanga province laced with pine trees, life-giving lakes and dams with mountains exuding boldness and confidence, was indeed a sight to behold. Being greeted by a herd of elephants upon arrival was the warmest welcome we could have received. This was followed by greetings from zebra, wildebeest and buck, as if we were cast in the great Circle of Life.

Whilst waking at three or four am seemed a treacherous crime on a Monday morning (and, well, every work day), we had our day's work cut out for us at the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic (HAHC). The HAHC was immaculately maintained, with equipment partitioned according to the corresponding labels and a well-stocked orderly pharmacy. The region was experiencing a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, so strict biosecurity was implemented and students were assigned to dirty and clean areas. Our team comprised Dzunisani Ngobeni, Carina Sibio, Bradley Taylor and myself, emanating an explosion of colours – a true "rainbow nation", as Dzuni stated proudly – united in one cause. And may I just add: we made a fine team! Dr Louise Biggs took to our names from day one and went on to amaze us all. She possessed a fountain of knowledge that sprang forth with more
On 6 June 2017, our group of five third-year veterinary science students implemented the Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) community project in the Orange Valley community, in collaboration with the Highveld Horse Care Unit (HHCU). This is a project we had been working towards for the entire year thus far, and we were very excited to finally see it through.

Due to the community partners mainly involving themselves with horses in the nearby community, we decided that a project following the horse care route would be our best bet. After meeting with the HHCU team and discussing our ideas, we decided to do research into making horse halters from recyclable materials such as old T-shirts. This was the main skill we wanted to teach the community; however, we also decided to speak on the primary wound care of horses, and African Horse Sickness.
VETSCO VENTURES TO WINTERVELD

The Veterinary Student Community Outreach Committee (VETSCO) organises two bovine outreaches on an annual basis. This is one of our biggest events for the year and a vast number of students eagerly sign up to participate in this amazing learning experience.

The outreach grants students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience that leaves every student feeling like a veterinarian.

Extensive planning and organising was done months before the day of the outreach, which occurred on Saturday, 24 June 2017. On Thursday, 22 June 2018, training for the outreach took place. This mandatory training reminded the students how to perform basic clinical exams, vaccinate skillfully and how to appropriately address the farmers and community members in the area. We had to highlight the importance of welfare and safety in the rural communities.

On the Saturday morning, before sunrise, 60 veterinary science students boarded a large bus, which was headed (which has recently been a major problem in the community). Our community project was very interactive, as we worked in smaller groups and taught hands-on horse care skills.

The day was busy and very tiring, but in the end it was worth it to leave the community knowing we had made a difference in the lives of others. The community was very pleased to have us there and we could tell that they were listening to every word that we said. I believe that we left the community having imparted some valuable skills. I hope that the community members that were present at our project will share their new skills with others.

We really enjoyed this experience and we learnt more than I ever thought we could have through this short project. It was a pleasure working with such a wonderful group of students and learning something new from each and every one of them.

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:

Dr Eugene Machimana 012 529 8100 Senior Lecturer: Community Engagement Chairperson eugene.machimana@up.ac.za
Sr Sarah Johnson 012 529 8387 Small Animal Section Head and Referrals Co-ordinator sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

The veterinary science students in the Orange Valley.

Community members learn valuable skills from the students.
towards Winterveld. We arrived at 07:30 and were welcomed by the friendly state veterinarians and animal health technicians. The students were then split into four large groups. Each group comprised 15 students from the same year level of study. Furthermore, we divided the Committee members evenly between each group. Most Committee members had previously attended numerous outreaches and were able to help coordinate the tasks of the day. A state veterinarian or animal health technician was assigned to lead each group.

Travelling to the designated farms required each group to jump onto the back of a bakkie. We drove on dirt roads through a magnificent landscape filled with stinkboom and marula trees. During this short ride, we also came across random herds of Nguni cattle and wondering goats. Once we arrived at the farm gate, we were greeted by beautiful orange orchids and hundreds of cattle. The tasks performed by each group were divided into two stations: pharmacy and vaccination. Pharmacy consisted of five students drawing up the vaccinations. The vaccination station consisted of ten students who administered the vaccines. BVSc students in the third to fifth year, as well as the second-year nurses, were given preference to the vaccinations. Farm workers, together with some students, helped herd the cattle into a crush. The crushes at the locations were not ideal, as rural areas lack the infrastructure to build stable and secure crushes. We used intuition and made use of our surroundings to overcome this problem. The biggest challenge was trying to herd as much cattle as we could to fill the crush, but at times, this proved most difficult and we ended up having to work on a large crush that had very few cattle.

Each group received four bottles of anthrax, three bottles of botulism and one bottle of black quarter. The group members administered 1 ml of anthrax vaccine, 2 ml of botulism and 2 ml of black quarter vaccines subcutaneously. Among the issues that arose were not having enough syringes and needles, and having too little black quarter and botulism vaccines. BVSc second-year students were given the option to dose the goats with Maxicare (dewormer). The fourth- and fifth-year students were given the opportunity to perform rectal exams for pregnancy diagnosis as part of their reproduction practical training.

The outreach ended at approximately 14:00, and all groups met at a central location. Even though students were immersed in dirt and smelled like cattle dung, they were thrilled that they had real clinical experience and I am positive that many created long-lasting memories and new friends along the way. Before we departed back to Onderstepoort Campus, we captured one last group photograph as proof of our hard work and memorable experience.

We would like to acknowledge the sponsorship of 15 bottles of anthrax and 30 bottles of botulism vaccines from Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) and the kind cash donation from the Department of Production Animals, which we used to buy seven bottles of black quarter vaccine.

I would like to thank the hardworking farmers of Winterveld and dedicated state veterinarians and animal health technicians for sacrificing their weekend to give us this unforgettable experience. VETSCO would like to thank Mr William Khutu and Mr Tshologelo Mojanaga. I would also like to thank the enthusiastic students at Onderstepoort Campus and the VETSCO Committee for their dedication and contribution to this outreach; without you all, this would not have been possible.
MEETING
Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 24 May 2018 at 13:30.

Dr Eugene Machimana receives 2018 EASA Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award

Dr Eugene Machimana, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Veterinary Science and previous Community Engagement Coordinator of the Faculty was awarded the 2018 Education Association of South Africa (EASA) Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award at a special gala evening held at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban on 16 January 2018.

The annual EASA conference, this year hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, represents a platform for higher education institutions to share their experiences through paper and poster presentations. EASA is an association that strives to promote excellence in educational research and science by means of interactive network formation and inclusive discourse by developing education, training and community development.

Dr Machimana’s award is in recognition of the successful completion of his PhD degree and subsequent publications based on the study for which two papers were presented by him at the conference. These had the following titles:

1. Higher education-rural school partners’ expectations and power dynamics of a community engagement partnership
2. Benefits and barriers of higher education community engagement in the South African rural school context: non-researcher partners’ perspective

His longitudinal study is titled “Retrospective experiences of a rural school partnership: informing global citizenship as a higher education agenda” and is available from http://hdl.handle.net/2263/60954. According to Dr Machimana his study at the Department of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education was conducted as part of a larger study called Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY), with Prof Liesel Ebersohn as the principal investigator.

FLY is an intervention that builds on a collaborative community engagement partnership, and was established in 2005 between the University of Pretoria, the Centre for the Study of Resilience, the Faculty of Educational Psychology and a remote South African secondary school located in the Enhlanzeni District Municipality in Mpumalanga. The main research purpose of FLY is to build knowledge of risk and resilience in rural schools by leveraging higher education and school community engagement partnership.

“It is indeed an honour to have received this award. Credit must go to Prof Ebersohn for believing in me and for the nomination for the EASA award,” Dr Machimana said. He therefore also dedicated the award to his two study supervisors, Prof Ebersohn and Dr Maximus Monaheng Sefotho. “Many people contributed to the successful completion of my PhD degree whose support I really appreciate. Gratitude goes to Prof Henry Annandale, Mr Chris van Blerk and Dr Paul van Dam (Faculty of Veterinary Science) as well as Mr Pieter and Ms Wilna Swart in Fish Hoek, Cape Town. I furthermore appreciate the support that I received from all the partners involved in the long-term higher education-rural school community engagement partnership,” he said.

Dr Machimana reserved special words of appreciation for his family: “My wife, Nondumiso, and Tomtenda and Tatenda (our handsome sons) paid a heavy price by living with an “absent” husband and father between 2013 and 2016 as they afforded me the space to pursue my doctoral degree. I will forever be indebted to them for this achievement. Thank you also to my mother, Ruth, for encouraging me and granting us siblings the opportunity to study. How I wish that the late Mr John Lawrence Machimana, my father, was here with us so that I could personally thank him for his contribution to our lives,” he said.

Finally, Dr Machimana thanked the EASA team, under the leadership of Prof Motlalepule Ruth Mampane, for honouring him with the prestigious 2018 Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award.
We are third-year veterinary science students that study at the University of Pretoria (UP). Our subject, Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) 300, is a course that allowed us to further our knowledge and skills with regard to communities.


We learn how to engage with community members, as well as how to interact with our peers and formulate intellectual group decisions that can benefit communities and the environment. We are Group 12, which comprises five veterinary science students. Our group was allocated to the Mamelodi community, where we worked in collaboration with the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) and Mogale Primary School. Our project was implemented on 7 June 2017 at the Mogale Primary School. We were allocated this date as it suited the learners and their teachers, especially in the midst of their examination timetable.

We were very honoured that they made time in their busy academic schedule for us. We gave each of the three Grade 7 classes a 30-minute presentation and a permanent poster was left in each of the three classrooms. The purpose of this is to help reinforce the take-home message we wanted to leave behind. We also visited the high school learners that were part of the Mae Jemison Science Reading Room at the University's Mamelodi Campus. We delivered a presentation to the high school learners about the importance of veterinary science in communities, as well as a few basic concepts of Rabies.

Our project aimed to help the Grade 7 learners get a clear understanding of the importance of basic animal health care, basic concepts on dog training, the One Health concept, important aspects regarding dog behaviour and language for dog bite prevention, as well as how to improve relationships with animals and pets. We also wanted to help the learners understand the basic role of a veterinarian. This project sought to encourage learners to be more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to be more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to become more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to become more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to become more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to become more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire learners to become more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities.

We found out that the school had introduced a support group called Soul Buddies that ensured that learners were not alone with regards to any particular difficult situation they were potentially facing within this community. Soul Buddies is a non-profit organisation (NPO) that allows learners to come together and face their struggles together and get help from organisations that address issues such as HIV/Aids and rape. Soul Buddies invites guest speakers who would inspire the learners towards a positive future. We were asked that this community engagement

Group 12 conducted their community engagement project at Mogale Primary School in Mamelodi.
As the students spoke and shared their life stories, more and more learners asked questions about the veterinary science field of study.

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