



## ***Beyond Expectation 8 Months Report Back***

In the past 8 months more than 440 learners were given an opportunity to reconnect with their core beings whilst they learn about environmental issues as we held more than 22 Camps thus far. We introduced these learners back to nature, awaken and sustain their interest and concern for our environment through our two days environmental experiential learning on Table Mountain.

We have taken the 440 children from 12 different schools which are Bongolwethu Primary School, Intsinga Primary School, Mzamomhle Primary School, Walta Teka Primary School, St Mary's Primary School, Litha Primary School, Nomlinganiselo Primary School, Liwa Primary School, Sophumelela Primary School, Entsona Primary School, Lihlohonono Primary School, Lwazi Primary School and Luzuko Primary School.

BEEP feels that in order to accomplish its mission to educate township children about the environment, the project needs to bring them to the mountain so that they can develop a sense of ownership and entitlement to their national heritage. In return it is hoped the children will bring the mountain and all that it stands for back to their communities.

### **My Feedback (Lindela)**

BEEP is really making a huge impact in the lives of the children that we have taken to Table Mountain. Firstly before the Camp, BEEP members visit the teachers from the schools that we work with before each Camp and emphasis on the criteria of learners that are needed, which they would select for the Camp.

The learners that we focus on for the Camp are those learners that are regarded as "slow learners" so to speak by their teachers and that are not given enough attention and adequate space to grow as such space is given to those that are regarded as bright kids.

We then give these learners an opportunity to find their core being, for us as members of BEEP we give every learner at equal chance & space to be free and express their minds with no fear of being prejudged. On Table Mountain, we have a Personal Journey Session which is focusing on the social aspect or challenges that are facing those children. Through this session we help those learners to unburden themselves by confronting their social ills they face back home at the place of healing. Through this session we came to realise that these so called 'slow learners' are slow due to their social circumstances or social backgrounds and therefore many of them have never been afforded with a space to unpack or confront their burdens or social ills and therefore once those children talk about their personal challenges, they breathe a sigh of relief as they then come to realised that they are not the only ones as individuals facing those social ills. " for me, I feel imprison when I'm at home because of how I'm treated as I stay with my father and my step-mother. I feel free when I'm at school because I'm much happier when I'm at school as when I'm at home I feel abused, as I'm treated like a slave, I sometimes wish I could go somewhere and not go to my home when I come from school said one learner from Entsona Primary School."

Our two day's excursion on Table Mountain have proven that Children are less overwhelmed by their social problems when they have access to green spaces. Scenic surrounds also have a positive influence in that they reduce aggression and violence. By encouraging children to conserve natural resources and take pride in their environment, they are less likely to drift into gangsterim, as the natural settings can provide tangible health benefits and play a significant role in deterring crime.

The mountain camps provide a safe space for township children to explore a variety of subjects relevant to their lives, finding ways to help empower them to escape the trap of poverty and the worst aspects of township life. Our Camp plays a pivotal role in rekindling the inner spirit of the children which we serve, as they came back to their communities lighter, motivated and rejuvenated due to the space they are enabled to unburden themselves whilst they learn about the importance to preserve our environment.

BEEP makes sure that all the school children and youth taken to its mountain experiential learning becomes involve in their School Environmental Clubs which include the School Curriculum Based Interactive Workshops in partnership with University of Cape Town(Department of Criminology) and we run these workshops in four different schools namely Mzomomhle, St Mary's, Bongolethu and Walta Teka Primary School.

Before we take the learners on our environmental experiential learning on Table Mountain, we make sure that they are conscious of the role they will be required to play after the camp and that they are willing to partake on our follow up initiatives, which focuses on the following objectives; School Curriculum based Environmental interactive workshops, Food Garden developments, Water Conservation and monitoring the use of Water in the respective schools, and Clean up Campaigns (in the schools and in the Community).

Therefore after each Camp, BEEP member's visit the school that would have been taken to Table Mountain and by then, the learners would have decided on Table Mountain what follow up programs they would be focusing on and we decides on how many times we would meet a week to work on that specific project at school, with an assistant of one of the teachers that we work with and the teacher would help to monitor and supervise the project in our absence whilst we would have the BEEP juniors at each school whom would report to the BEEP seniors on the progress of a specific programs at school and help to monitor the project in the teacher's absence.

To date we are working with more than 440 children from 12 schools which are mentioned above on various projects. As mentioned above we run School Curriculum Interactive Workshops in four different schools, we run a Food Garden at Intsinga and Bongolethu Primary School. On the following Primary Schools which are: Litha, Nomlinganiselo, Liwa, Sophumelela, Entsona, Lihlohonono, Lwazi and Luzuko Primary School we run the projects on Water Conservation and monitoring the use of Water in the schools, and Clean up Campaigns (at the schools).

We've seen gradual shift from the way the children perceive environment to be now, to a more respecting behaviour and children are now living with environment, not on environment. The understanding, awareness and appreciation of the environment by the learners have been immensely improved and the academic performance, presentation skills and leadership qualities of the children which we serve as also immensely improved according to their teacher's feedback and therefore we want to maintain that progress.

## **Feedback Back from the Children**

### **Yonela Mfubesi, Age: 13 years, Grade: 6, School: Intsinga Primary School.**

I was one of the lucky ones, to have been given a change to go to Table Mountain. I enjoyed the experience of a life time on Table Mountain; this was a first time for me to go to such a great place like that. At the start of the hike at Constantia nek, when we were been informed on what to expect on Table Mountain by BEEP members, I was no sure if was going to make it to the top. I was wondering where we were going to find the route to the top of Table Mountain.

Along the way I was struggled to hike, it was really hard for me especially on disa gorge, I did not think I was going to make it to the top but Onke encouraged me and I managed to get to the top which was really great for me personally. What I enjoyed the most was the beauty of fynbos to see the different kinds of species like *Biodiversity* was also great. I have learnt about different kinds of species like Proteas, Ericas,

and Resto's etc. I have learnt that these plants are native to the Cape and that are found along the coastal areas.

## Feedback Back from the Children

**Thembelani Mandoyi, Age: 12, Grade: 6, School: St Mary's Primary School.**

For me it was my first time to go to Table Mountain and unfortunately we chose a wrong day for the CAMP, as it was pouring with rain. The more we climb higher the harder it became and each and every one of us were very wet. I must say that our backpacks were not really wet, as we had to look after them during our walk on the rain day up Table Mountain.

Beside the weather, we still enjoyed the Camp, when we got to the Hut, we changed our cloths and Lindela and Onke dried our takkies or hiking boots and some of our clothes which were very wet. We still managed to listen to some of the discussion which were about the environment when we got to the Hut, we learnt about Water, the importance of it, which is really needed in our bodies and that 75% of our bodies' is covered with water and therefore it was important that we save water and that we should pass on the knowledge that we have learnt from the Camp to our parents and other learners in schools.

## Feedback Back from the Children

**Gigaba Akhona, Age: 12 years, Grade: 6, School: Mzamomhle Primary School**

The camp with BEEP was very nice; I had a great time on Table Mountain. It was my first time to go to Table Mountain and to be in nature. I enjoyed every moment of it, it was very nice and all of us enjoyed the walk up to Table Mountain even though we thought we were going to go up on a catch (lift) or Cable Car but I'm still happy that I got to hike up via the road called Disa Gorge.

We were little bit tired when we walked for the long time, we thought that we were going to take few hours to get to the place which we were going to but the road that we used took longer than we thought but we were not in a rush to get to the top, we were just enjoying ourselves and we also learnt a lot about environment.

I enjoyed the debate about littering, where others were saying that littering is right and others were saying that littering is wrong. I was on the side that was saying that littering is right even though we knew that littering is wrong. It was a challenge to be on that side because we had to come up with points to support our statement in order to win the debate but at the end we discovered that we were both winners but the truth is that littering is wrong but we were just challenging ourselves in a form of debate, of which I'm also happy about that as now I can be able to debate, so on that session I got to learn two things, about Littering and about how to debate.

**BONGOLETHU FOOD GARDEN**

