

BANA BA BOBIRWA PROJECT REPORT

GENERAL

Bana ba Bobirwa has successfully added a team's page to the website to provide more credibility and transparency.

Eco-Warrior Clubs

On the 19th and 20th of August, the BbB programme co-ordinator, Angelica Pietersen and the BbB teacher, Charlotte Gerrish (Jonsson) visited the 6 primary schools of the Bobirwa district, accompanied by Reuben Kokole and Tanya McKenzie of the Tuli Conservation Trust. The visits were primarily to provide teacher Charlotte the necessary insight into what the environments at school are like to acquire a better understanding of what the schools have access to and to ensure that the curriculum that she has developed is feasible within the environment. It gave her ideas as to what additions can be made to build on the current lessons. Each school proudly showcased their veggie garden projects which is part of the curriculum, and this gave the BbB and TCT visitors an idea of what each school's challenges are and what type of vegetables may be better suited to grow in the sunny, arid environment.

We are incredibly proud of Lentswe le Moriti as they were the only school thus far to achieve a first harvest with enough produce to feed both the school and the surrounding community. This is a remarkable milestone that demonstrates the dedication of the learners, teachers, and community members, as well as the long-term value of sustainable gardening. In addition to this, they have the most challenging environment as the village is within the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, rather than on the periphery.

Bana ba Bobirwa strongly believes that it is important to install a protective fence around the garden, as well as shade netting over the garden, to prevent animals and birds from from damaging or consuming the crops. An application has been made to the Tuli Conservation Trust to this end. This measure will safeguard the hard work, time, and resources invested in creating and sustaining the garden, ensuring it continues to provide educational, nutritional, and environmental benefits for years to come.

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BbB obtained information on how many children and teachers are involved in the Eco-Warrior clubs and they are as follows:

- Semolale Primary School – 37 children + 4 teachers
- Gobojango Primary School -29 children + 5 teachers + 1 young community volunteer
- Mabolwe Primary School – 16 children + 5 teachers
- Lentswe le Moriti Primary School – 30 Children + 3 teachers
- Motlhabaneng Primary School – 30 – 35 children + 5 teachers
- Mathathane Primary School – 35 Children + 7 teachers

Bana ba Bobirwa 2025 Camps

It is a great privilege and honour to share that, after months of planning and preparing, BbB conducted two successful back-to-back camps at Jwala Camp!

On the 21st of August, all the volunteers that signed up as Eco-Guardians on the camps arrived in time for lunch and introductions.

The volunteer and staff training was powerful, and it covered the following modules;

- Module 1 – Introduction to the Bana ba Bobirwa Programme
- Module 2 – Mentorship
- Module 3 – Creating a Safety Bubble
- Module 4 – Intentional Programming
- Module 5 – Importance of Reflection
- Module 6 – Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteers and Staff

The intent of each module was to give a quick overview of what BbB is trying to achieve in the camps, a fun activity to demonstrate this, an evaluation of that activity i.e. do we understand the intent and a summary which basically re-emphasises the intent of that training module.

Each module was divided up between the volunteers and the Programme Co-ordinator to be presented in a fun and engaging way (i.e. not a lecture from one person, but an interactive process with all involved).

These modules are crucial to ensure that each volunteer understands what BbB is trying to achieve, to create a safe environment for the children attending camp and that each person understands their roles and responsibilities to run the camps successfully. Volunteers and staff were given a set of camp rules and guidelines which were imperative to adhere to during camps and the Room Leaders were given an additional set of rules and guidelines for their four children per tent.

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We were incredibly fortunate to have Tanya McKenzie join us for the volunteer training day, as well as the first full day of Camp 1, ensuring that everything was set up for success for the rest of the camps. Her presence made the experience even more special, as three of our volunteers had previously participated as children in the CITW Programme when Tanya served as the coordinator.

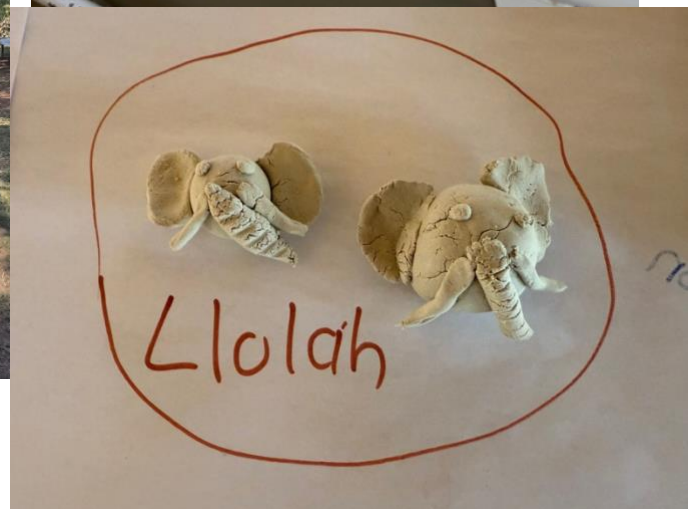
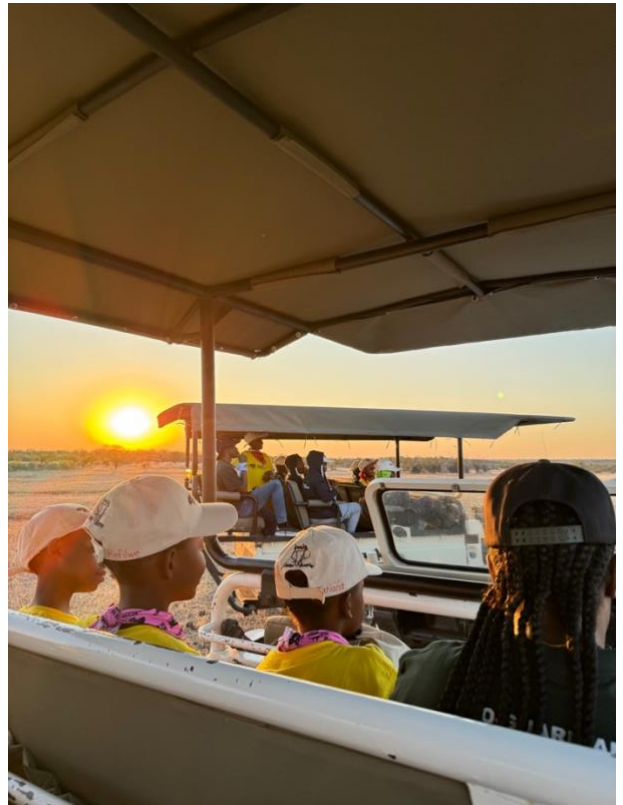
Additionally, Bana ba Bobirwa was very fortunate to have one of our very own directors – Emmah Cally Mosidi volunteer for camp 1 – her role was crucial as the facilitatory and translator but also her understanding of the Jwala camps was imperative to ensure we run successful camps!



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List of the highlights of the camps; list of topics covered on the camps; quotes from children.

The subjects covered in the Bana ba Bobirwa Eco-camps included wildlife conservation, photography, littering, web of life and eco-systems, living and non-living, general wildlife tracking, eco-tourism careers and **very importantly anti-poaching**. These lessons were always complemented by engaging game drives that reinforce the topics covered.



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Creative activities such as crafting animals from clay and painting t-shirts were included to stimulate creativity and imagination. The curriculum also incorporated impactful and thought-provoking anti-poaching activities, a crucial topic in Southern Africa. The children were particularly captivated by Botswana's poaching laws, highlighting its importance.

The team-building activities featured the "2025 Bana ba Bobirwa Olympics," where children learned the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and the importance of dedication in achieving their goals and dreams, drawing inspiration from Botswana's own Tebogo.

During the camp, each child had a turn to share a small point-and-shoot camera and earned to "shoot" animals with a camera, rather than with a gun or a spear. At the conclusion of the camp, each participant selected a favourite photo which was printed, while the school received a memory stick containing all the children's photos and other photos taken on camp.

BbB will aim to obtain at least 4 more small point and shoot cameras before the December camps, but ultimately, we believe that we will require a total of 16 cameras so that each child can have access to a camera for the duration of camp.

On the last full day of each camp, we had two guest speakers from Mashatu to chat about their roles at Mashatu as well as other career opportunities within Mashatu, their talks have been incredibly impactful as many of the children in their feedback forms mentioned they wanted a career within the hospitality industry.

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Children stories from the Eco-Camps

Toro Mpedi – 11-year-old girl

- In her pre-camp form, she expressed interest in learning more about anti-poaching.

Fionah Galebolae – 11 Years old girl

- I loved seeing the animals on this camp.
- I would like to become a chef when I grow up.

Tatiana Maleke – 11 years old girl

- Conservation means protecting wild animals from being poached.
- I would like to be an Eco-Guardian when I grow up.

Olorato Ratshipo – 11-year-old girl

- I think we will learn how to conserve plants and animals.
- What I liked most about camp is learning from our guest speakers from Uncle Rex (anti-poaching), the various careers from Mashatu guest speakers.

Bofelo Seleka – 11-year-old girl

- I would like to be a camp general manager when I grow up.

Refilwe Gombalume – 12-year-old girl

- We can stop animals from being poached by teaching people that poaching is illegal or harmful.
- I love the game drives the most as I got see wild animals.
- I would like to be a wildlife vet when I grow up.

Buhle Mazebedi – 10-year-old girl

- I would like to learn about why people poach even if there are only a few animals left in our environment.
- Nature and wildlife are important to preserve for future generations.

Brian Maphari – 12-year-old boy

- Conservation means to protect animals from danger.
- I loved learning the most about food chains and the web of life

Mpho Ngala – 11-year-old boy

- Wildlife means how animals live in nature.
- I would like to become an anti-poacher when I grow up

Favour Mooketsi – 12-year-old girl

- Conservation means taking care of plants and animals.
- I loved learning about conservation

Volunteer comments

The camps have changed my life and made me realised that I am not doing enough to teach people and children about conservation.

I liked the most when the children started to open up and not afraid to ask questions, BbB helps to build confidence.

All animals are important to keep the ecosystem balanced – I now advocate for all animals – including the ones that I fear like snakes.

I think the programme is wonderful! I love the opportunity it is giving the children to learn more about conservation but also exposing them to opportunities. It's empowering them to make decisions on their future. I loved all the lessons, workbooks and games. It made the content intentional but fun.

I learned how important conservation is for Botswana and how much the country relies on Tourism. Education is key, especially for the future generations of Botswana.

I learnt a lot about the importance of animals and why they need to be protected as well as the different career opportunities within the tourism industry. If I learned this at a younger age I would have joined the tourism industry.

The Experience changed the way I view the tourism industry, and I will generate awareness and the importance of tourism in my village.

There is just something about giving to others without receiving anything physically –and I am so much more grateful than I was before.

Challenges

- We were fortunate to have a well-balanced mix of new, inexperienced volunteers and seasoned, experienced ones at the camps, which provided a solid foundation to kick things off. However, for future camps, we aim to bring in volunteers with diverse skill sets and teaching styles to better enhance and complement the overall camp experience such as medical students, film students/nature conservation students etc.
- It is vital for the hosting camp to have **all general staff** who will be on duty and who will be in the company of volunteers and children during camp to be present during the training to ensure the staff have an understanding of how the camps are being run. At times some staff members who have not attended the training, go against the ethos of the camp and it demotivates volunteers and staff who have made the effort to attend training.

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Conclusion

From the above comments from both the Bobirwa children and volunteers, I can confidently say that the BbB Camps hosted by Jwala were a huge success – a very special thanks to the Tuli Conservation Trust our major sponsor who made this all possible, the TCT liaison Officer for playing a major role in sourcing the equipment and collecting the child indemnities and applications, the Jwala owners and directors for donating the camps as well as making a very generous financial donation that went towards the food for the camps, the Jwala and Dopotta management team for taking ownership of running the over camps, from cooking, cleaning, patrolling the camp for predators, Shem Compion of C4 for affording the time to the Programme Co-ordinator, Mashatu guest donors of equipment, toiletries, camp stationery, Raymond Steyn for funding the transport of Tanya McKenzie to attend the camps, Charlotte Gerrish (Jonsson) for all the work on the workbooks and for the playing an integral role in running the camps as camp co-ordinator. Tuli Wilderness for temporarily storing the BbB equipment from December 2024 until August 2025. All the volunteers and Jwala and Dopotta staff who gave selflessly of their time to cook, clean, provide game drives and overall management of running the camps as well as all the transfers.

Our success in running the Bana ba Bobirwa programme depends on the commitment and passion of everyone involved, from the children in our Eco-Warrior Clubs to our dedicated Eco-Guardians, the Jwala and Dopotta staff, that volunteered and were involved in the camps, partners, and sponsors.

Thank you for being a part of this journey, and for your contribution toward empowering children, communities, and conserving the environment. We trust that your involvement with BbB will be as rewarding for you as it is impactful for the children.

Best regards,

Angelica Pietersen

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