

December 2025

BANA BA BOBIRWA PROJECT REPORT

Bana ba Bobirwa 2025 Camps

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

On the 5th of December 2025, all the volunteers that signed up as Eco-Guardians on the camps, arrived in time for lunch and introductions.

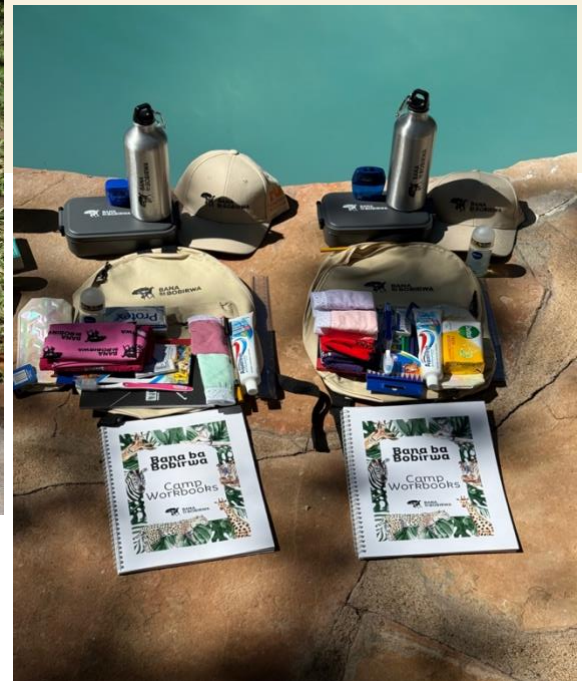
The volunteer and staff training was concentrated, but lots of fun as we covered a variety of modules to provide a comprehensive overview in a short space of time. This entails what BbB is trying to achieve through the curriculum, a fun activity to demonstrate this, an evaluation of that activity i.e. 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).

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 Tent Leaders were given an additional set of rules and guidelines for their four children per tent.

On the 6th of December, we concluded the volunteer training, learned the welcome song (Dumela) and started preparing for the children's arrival in the afternoon. Preparations consisted of packing their goodie bags with donated items from new sponsors which included toiletries, stationery, branded items such as caps, bandanas, water bottles, lunch boxes, BbB workbooks and back packs.

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At midday, the children arrived feeling shy and nervous and were warmly welcomed with a traditional Setswana greeting song, immediately creating a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. They were then lined up to greet the Eco-Guardians, after which they washed their hands and were each given a cold juice and lunch.

Following lunch, all Eco-Guardians introduced themselves and facilitated group introductions, ensuring that every child felt welcomed and included. Each child was then called forward to receive a name tag, with the Eco-Guardians assisting them in decorating their tags using colourful stickers.

The children were lined up from shortest to tallest to receive their Bana ba Bobirwa (BbB) T-shirts in ascending size order, with each child receiving two shirts for the duration of the camp.



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They were then introduced to their Tent Leaders, who serve as their camp “parents” both day and night. Each child was allocated a tent and a coloured bandana to identify their group, with Tent Leaders wearing matching bandanas for easy identification. The children also received their goodie bags and were given time to settle into their tents, change into their new shirts, and familiarise themselves with their surroundings.



Once everyone was settled, all volunteers and staff conducted safety drills, covering emergency situations and camp procedures to ensure a safe and secure environment for the duration of the camp.



The afternoon concluded with ice-breaker games and songs, helping everyone feel more relaxed and encouraging the children to start building connections with one another.

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An example of a day at camp

Camp 1 Day 3 Monday the 8th December 2025 Mabolwe		
Meal Leaders Ogone and Thato		
Time	Activity	Leader
05h30 - 05h45	Wake Up	Katie, Dimpho, Kitso & Mompoti
05h45 - 06h00	Morning Games	Wynand, Carli and all volunteers
06h00 - 06h30	Breakfast and Super Campers Awards & Snack Pack	Ogone and Thato
06h30 - 10h30	Lodge Visit Careers - tracking	Guides and Mentors
10h30 - 11h10	Anti-poaching lesson & Game	William, KB, Char and guides
11h10 - 12h00	Baking Activity & Eco-Tourism game	Char, Carli and Tonic
12h00 - 12h30	Lunch and Super Camper Awards & Snack Pack	Ogone and Thato
12h30 - 13h15	Quiet Time and Reflection on Camp	Katie, Dimpho, Kitso & Mompoti
12h30 - 13h15	Collect Cameras, Chargers and 1 Photo per Child	Ronald with help of tent leaders
13h15 - 14h00	Anti-poaching Talk	Rex with the help of William
13h15 - until done	Photo Presentation Compile	Ogone with help of other mentors
14h00 - 14h45	Feedback forms	Angie, Richie, Char and other mentors
14h45 - 16h00	Amazing Race (team challenges)	Wynand, Thato, KB, Carli
16h00 - 19h00	Last Game Drive & Snack Out - water conservation & erosion	Guides and Mentors
19h00 - 19h30	Dinner	Ogone and Thato
19h30 - 20h00	Awards	Angie with helpers
20h00 - 20h45	Reuben talk and Photo Presentation	William, OG with help of other mentors
20h45 - 21h00	Shower and Tent Chat	Katie, Dimpho, Kitso & Mompoti
21h00	Staff and Mentor Meeting Volunteer Meeting	All Activity Leaders
21h30	Lights Out	Katie, Dimpho, Kitso & Mompoti

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

The Bana ba Bobirwa Eco-Camps built on the knowledge children gained throughout the year in their Eco-Warrior Clubs and covered a wide range of subjects, including wildlife conservation, photography, littering and waste management, ecosystems and the web of life, living and non-living things, basic wildlife tracking, eco-tourism career awareness, and—most importantly—anti-poaching education. These lessons were consistently reinforced through engaging game drives that brought the learning to life.

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Creative activities such as clay animal crafting and T-shirt painting were incorporated to encourage creativity and imagination. The curriculum also included impactful and thought-provoking anti-poaching activities, a critically important topic in Southern Africa. The children were particularly engaged by learning about Botswana's poaching laws, which underscored the significance of conservation efforts.

Team-building activities included the "2025 Bana ba Bobirwa Olympics," through which the children learned the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and dedication in pursuing their goals and dreams, inspired by Botswana's own Tebogo.

During the camp, each child had the opportunity to share a small point-and-shoot camera and learned to "shoot" animals with a camera rather than with a gun or spear. At the conclusion of the camp, each participant selected a favourite photograph to be printed, while each school received a memory stick containing all the children's photographs, along with additional images captured during the camp.



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BbB was fortunate to have a variety of guest speakers who came to give a presentation to the children about their careers within the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Wendy Du Toit, Francois Du Toit, Peter Bale and Lala Bale – your message to the children was beautiful and impactful! BbB sincerely appreciate the time taken to come and talk to the children.



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During Camp 2, we were fortunate to have two members from the HR team, Binkie and Lebo, along with TJ, a manager, speak to the children about their respective roles. They encouraged the children to work hard and reminded them that while education is important, good manners, discipline, and a strong work ethic are equally essential for success.

We were also fortunate to have Motlhabane, a Senior Anti-Poaching and Security Officer, visit the camp to speak to the children about the vital work of the anti-poaching team within the reserve. He explained why poaching is harmful and concluded with a powerful message: *"No animals means no tourists; no tourists means no income; and no income means no jobs."*

Lastly, we were honoured to have Reuben Kokole, the TCT Liaison Officer, speak to the children about his role in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve. He shared how attending a similar camp as a child inspired him to pursue a career in conservation, encouraging the children to see the possibilities that such experiences can create.



Children stories from the Eco-Camps

Innocent Masupe– 10-year-old boy

- 'I would like to be a Mashatu Engineer when I grow up.'

Prince Malesela – 10-year-old boy

- 'Wilderness areas are important because they protect wild animals.'
- 'Conservation means to protect something like water, soil, animals and plants.'

Catherine Ezeocha– 10-year-old girl

- 'I am happy to be here because I am going to learn about different things.'
- 'I am going to stop animals from being poached by telling the police.'

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Angel Lucas – 12-year-old girl

- 'I would like to learn about the importance of conservation of wild animals.'
- 'Conservation means using something wisely so that it cannot become extinct.'

Rorisang Kgoboko– 11-year-old boy

- 'I would like to work at Mashatu as a Camp Manager.'
- 'We should take care of the environment and animals by not littering because animals may end up dying. '

Oarabile Gomotsang – 11-year-old boy

- 'I would like to teach others about the beauty of Mashatu when I grow up.'

Tiny Ben – 11-year-old girl

- 'I would like to join Bana ba Bobirwa when I grow up. '

Liyona Masupe– 11-year-old girl

- 'I would like to work as a person who protects nature by becoming an anti-poacher officer.'
- 'I loved learning about how important wildlife is to our country. '

Omaatla Sethudi – 9-year-old girl

- 'I would like to be an Eco-Guardian when I grow up. '

Tebo Makgado – 13-year-old boy

- 'I would like to be a manager at Mashatu. '

Joshua Josiah 10-year-old boy

- 'I would like to learn about wildlife and the circle of life. '
- 'Wilderness areas are important because they bring tourism to Botswana.'
- Pre-camp form:' I would like to be an ambassador of Botswana when I finish school.'
- Post camp form:' I would like to become a ranger. '

Amantle Serumola 12-year-old girl

- 'I would like to learn about how to take care of the environment and animal conservation.'
- 'I would like to be a soldier so that I can protect wildlife from those who do not conserve.'

Eliakim Mangogola- 10-year-old boy

- 'I would like to learn about the environment. '
- 'I learned about the environment, anti-poaching, careers and how to take care of animals. '
- Pre-camp:' I would like to be a person who protects animals and teach people about them. '
- Post camp:' I would like to be an anti-poacher. '

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Mervin Matlapeng– 13-year-old boy

- 'I would like to work at Mashatu. '

Kao France – 13-year-old boy

- Pre-camp form: 'I would like to work at Mashau because it is good to take care of animals and to teach people about animals. '
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a Chef at Mashatu Lodge when I grow up. '

Antonio Nkgopotsang – 11-year-old boy

- 'I learned that if your mother/father buys illegal meat that we should report it to the police so that we can trace the poachers. '

Judith Mosholombe – 11 – year old girl

- 'Conservation means conserving things like water, our environment and our beautiful animals.'
- Pre camp form: 'I would like to be a doctor.'
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a chef when I grow up.'

Tumelo Madome – 11-year-old girl

- 'I will teach people at home that poaching is not good because our animals are decreasing. '
- Pre camp form: 'I would like to be a nurse one day.'
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a wildlife ranger because I want to protect animals from being poached. '

Tracy Legwaila – 11-year-old girl

- Pre-camp form: 'I would like to be a doctor to help sick people. '
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a wildlife person when I grow up. '
- 'I loved learning about wildlife. '

Neo Keolopile 11-year-old girl

- Pre-camp form: 'I would like to be a doctor. '
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a photographer when I grow up. '

Tiroyaone Mathathi – 10-year-old boy

- Pre-camp form: 'I would like to learn and teach other children about animals when I finish school. '
- Post camp form: 'I would like to be a ranger when I grow up. '

Volunteer comments

'I appreciate that the programme provides all the necessary materials and resources to run both the clubs and the camps, as well as the strong, positive relationships the organisers have built with the teachers and children.'

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'Camp highlights for me were learning new games and Uncle Francois speech and message to the children about conservation. '

'I volunteered to give back to the programme, as I am a CITW alumni. I liked the lodge visits as it exposed children to tourism and conservation careers. '

'BbB is such a great community of people that are always ready to lend a helping hand!'

'I liked the anti-poaching lesson and talk the most because it helps to raise awareness and spread the word to educate our friends and family about loving and protecting our animals. '

'I liked how everyone who volunteered worked well together for both camps! '

'Seeing how small village children are so knowledgeable and smart, the potential that they have is huge and really opened my eyes. It was a very heartwarming experience. '

'I volunteered because seeing the children smiling, filled with joy, and eager to learn is what these camps are truly about. Through this experience, I have found my light—and so have the children. I learned that Botswana depends heavily on its wildlife, and that children sometimes just need a little encouragement for their confidence and strengths to shine.'

'I love the strong spirit of teamwork and the well-organised nature of the programme. '

'The experience will always be life-changing, as it highlights the importance of conserving the environment and shows that we can all play a role in protecting nature.'

'I loved that the children were exposed to the various careers available in the reserve, as this experience will help them make more informed and thoughtful decisions when choosing their own career paths in the future. The experience has completely changed my life. As someone aspiring to become a guide, I learned so much about conservation, wildlife, and different bird species I had never known before—knowledge that will be essential for my future career.'

Challenges

- We were fortunate to have a well-balanced mix of new, less-experienced volunteers alongside seasoned and experienced individuals at the camps, which provided a strong foundation for the programme. Looking ahead, we aim to broaden our volunteer base by including individuals with diverse skill sets and teaching approaches—such as medical students, film students, and nature

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conservation students—to further enrich and complement the overall camp experience.

- Transport costs from Gauteng for the Programme Co-ordinator and other volunteers from there, are high. While these are budgeted for, a more economical solution will always be sought.
- 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.

Conclusion

Since our incorporation in 2024, BbB has successfully run six camps, and we are deeply encouraged by the traction gained and the continued growth of the programme.

Based on the feedback from both the Bobirwa children and our volunteers, I can confidently say that the Bana ba Bobirwa programme has been a resounding success.

Our sincere thanks go to the Tuli Conservation Trust, our major sponsor, for making this initiative possible, and to the TCT Liaison Officer for playing a key role in sourcing essential equipment. We are also deeply grateful to the Mashatu owners and directors for generously donating the camps.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to van Bommel Safari's for their generous donation in support of our conservation-through-education initiative. We are deeply grateful for their kindness and continued support of Bana ba Bobirwa. Such contributions are truly life-changing—each one opens doors to opportunity, fuels the dreams of our children, and helps strengthen the future of the Bobirwa communities.

Special thanks to Shem Compion of C4 for dedicating time to the Programme Coordinator and for donating a storage unit for BbB equipment; to Mashatu guests for their generous donations of equipment and camp stationery; to Emerald Executive Transfers for donating a transfer; and to Charlotte Gerrish for her extensive work on the programme workbooks and for attending the camps. We also thank Tuli Wilderness for temporarily storing BbB equipment this year, as well as all the volunteers and Mashatu staff who selflessly gave their time to support the camps.

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Lastly, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Mother Bear Project for donating three years' worth of bears to BbB. These bears are deeply loved by the children and serve as a perfect keepsake, allowing them to reflect on the wonderful memories and experiences they had at camp.



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The success of the Bana ba Bobirwa programme is driven by the commitment and passion of everyone involved—from the children in our Eco-Warrior Clubs, to our dedicated Eco-Guardians, the Mashatu staff who volunteered and supported the camps, as well as our partners and sponsors.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for your invaluable contribution to empowering children and communities while conserving the environment. We trust that your involvement with BbB will be as rewarding for you as it is meaningful for the children we serve.

Best regards,

Angelica Pietersen

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