

South Africa 2010 – Football and Literacy Development

Wednesday 6th October 2010 was the start of a life-changing experience for the 10 students and 3 teachers that travelled to South Africa to aid young children's literacy and football skills.

Although the flight was extremely long, totalling 17 hours after a first flight to Dubai and then on to Durban International Airport, the group were in great spirits as they prepared to change the lives of under-privileged children. On the Friday, we spent the morning at a Pre-School which was an incredible and refreshing experience as we had the chance to play activities with young children aged 4-7. Afterwards we continued on to Stanger Secondary School which was an amazing opportunity and it seemed as if we were being treated like royalty. At the school we had the chance to 'sit in' on the lessons that the 'learners' of Stanger School had. However, visiting Stanger gave the group the chance to see the remarkable fundraising work that Beauchamp have made towards the Computer/Library facility built on the school grounds.

The main aim of the trip was to spend a week working with 'learners' at Lower Tugela Primary School coaching football and helping them develop their literacy skills. We worked with over 60 students in grades 4 – 6. Each group were involved with both literacy development activities and football coaching each day. From the expressions of the children, it was clear to see that each and every one of them thoroughly enjoyed the football aspect of each day. However, they were all also keen to develop their literacy skills and enjoyed the individual reading and group activities which included word searches and games. It was great to see how well the 'learners' literacy and football skills developed over the week.

Throughout the trip, although we worked extremely hard within the school, Miss Cunningham, Miss Newbury and Mr Pemberton organised activities for everybody to do after school hours. We visited an aquarium and a water park over the first weekend which was great fun and even gave us a chance to swim with sharks and snorkel in the aquarium. Over the week, we also had the chance to visit Shakaland; a Zulu cultural centre which was an enjoyable experience and really gave us the chance to connect with the locals and join in with the cultural aspects of their society through dancing, singing and other activities. Other activities included a tour of Moses Mabida Football Stadium where the semi finals of the World cup were held, quad biking, shopping and bowling.

To top the whole experience off, the most thrilling part of the activities had to be the Safari on the final weekend. This was amazing. Seeing wild animals up close such as; Giraffes, Elephants, Zebras, Antelopes, Baboons, Monkeys, Wilder Beasts and even Rhinos was breathtaking.

In Conclusion, the whole experience of this trip is indescribable and I can speak for everyone when I say that the people and children we met have changed our lives in so many different ways. It has made me feel so grateful for the things I have, whilst many families in South Africa do not even own mirrors. However, I feel that the experience in going to South Africa was extremely beneficial for the Beauchamp students as well as the children at Lower Tugela. Overall it was a fantastic trip and I would love to have the opportunity of returning at some point in the future.

Matt Westerman

A memory I will never forget happened at Lower Tugela Primary School. One break time we went outside. All of the students were so happy and excited they just kept running around grabbing us and screaming. Then they all followed us while jumping and singing. At the end they all surrounded us. All the students on the levels above us were waving and screaming. We all kept blowing our whistles and all the students chanted and jumped in tune with our whistles. These are just a few of the many moments that made this trip so special that I will never forget it. Once again thank you Mr Parker, Mr Mitchell and everybody else who gave me the opportunity to enrich my life but participating in this life changing trip. I would strongly recommend this to any other student and there was only one problem with the trip, it was not long enough!

Harmeet Singh

South Africa 2010 - the day by day diary

Wednesday 6th October 2010

Late evening, we flew from Birmingham airport all the way to Dubai Airport. During the long flight, we had a variety of games, films and TV shows to watch and enjoy.

Thursday 7th October 2010

8 whole hours later, it was a bright and early day and we arrived at Dubai airport, the airport was very nicely done up as well, with water fountains and marble flooring, it was beautiful. After another long enduring wait...trust both aeroplane flights to be delayed and all we wanted to do was go to South Africa! We boarded the plane and 7 hours later, we had finally arrived at The Durban airport. It was early evening, there were a lot of lights and as we got out of the airport there was a lovely warm breeze...it had suddenly hit us that we were no longer in the UK. We loaded our luggage on the minibus and travelled to the Salt Rock Hotel, this is where we were staying for majority of the visit. As we arrived at the hotel, lots of people who worked there were very helpful in taking our luggage and carrying it to our rooms. The rooms were absolutely gorgeous, each of our rooms had an upstairs and a downstairs, and the view from our windows was spectacular. Literally, a minute away from the beach and the sea, to our surprise the waves were extraordinarily loud in the evening. At the hotel, we could have plenty to eat as it was a buffet, which ensured we weren't ever left feeling hungry! We brought books, pens, footballs, bags, clothes and various other items in donation to the schools we were visiting. From this, we collected all the clothes that we all brought in our luggage and prepared to the following day which entitled visiting the pre-school and secondary school.

Friday 8th October 2010

We woke up quite early to have breakfast for 7am, got ready to leave to Shakashead pre-school. We travelled through a small village and it was different seeing so much scenery on their dual carriageways and you would even see people walking on the roads to where they worked. Firstly, we drove to a different primary school as our driver got lost and then realised that we were not at the pre-school that we were expected to be at. A very kind child who came to this school came in our bus and showed us the way to the pre-school. Once we arrived at the pre-school, the head teacher showed us the way around the pre-school, we saw where the children played and what their classrooms looked like. It was sad to hear that the children who attend this pre-school may not have seen their own reflection in the mirror, something we are used to seeing every day so the teacher had taken a photo of each and every child so that they could see what they looked like. There were approximately 100 children at the pre-school and they were to be separated between us so we had approximately 10 children each. With these children, we played with the footballs we had brought along with us, played on their swings, and games such as 'tig', which they thoroughly enjoyed. We also took pictures of them and showed them and they loved to pose as shown in this picture below. We then travelled to Stanger Secondary School. Beauchamp College has an international link with this school and has funded its Fundamental Centre which has books and computers for the students to use. Once we arrived at the school, a happy school prefect (Fortune) gave us a tour of their school where we saw classrooms and their playing field. After lunch, we had the chance to observe lessons in different departments whilst also getting involved and talking to the students as well. After this, we then went to the Luthuli museum (Nobel Peace prize winner), we got to see Albert Luthuli's house and learnt about what he did.

Saturday 9th October 2010

This was the only day where we had a lie-in and after breakfast we were able to relax and spend time on the beach or in the hotel. Some of us played football, did some reading, went running, played some cards and even got to play in the sea. We were extremely lucky to be literally a minute away from the beach. In the afternoon we went to Shakaland, the Zulu cultural centre, where we could learn more about the Zulu culture and its history. As part of the tour, we watched a video of the types of battles they had in the past and we learnt about King Shaka. We also saw what they fought with in the battle, and learnt about how they lived. The roles in a family would also differ as the men could have multiple wives who cooked, washed and cleaned for them on different days. The people who gave us the tour, then played music on xylophones and we watched them dancing. We also had the chance to participate in the dancing even though some of us could not get our legs high enough!

Sunday 10th October 2010

Waking up at 7am and the temperature outside was already extremely hot! Today we travelled to Usharka Land. In the morning we visited the aquarium, where we saw a wide range of fishes and sharks. We then saw a seal show, where we saw a seal show us some tricks. Afterwards, we saw a dolphin show, where they performed multiple stunts which were really cool to watch. In the afternoon, we went to the water park, where we all got to ride and have fun on various water rides. Additionally, we managed to do some snorkelling that's with sharks and fishes in the water as well which was absolutely thrilling! In the evening, we discussed the types of activities we were going to do in our groups for the football/literacy project. We were split into 2 groups so that one group could do football coaching whilst the other helped to develop children's literary skills and then we would swap over still working with the same group.

Monday 11th October 2010

To start the day off, we had breakfast at a shocking 6:45am and travelled to Lower Tugela Primary School where we were participating in the football and literacy project. We got there and everyone was looking at us as we were the first international group to attend the school from overseas. They automatically offered us breakfast and throughout the day we ended up having 3 meals a day, just at the school! We then got to work with our groups, ranging from grades 4-6, however, the ages did vary as in their education system if they do not pass their tests some children can get held back a year. Today, we thought we would do some silly stretches, running, skipping, hopping, dribbling with the ball and to finish with a shooting practise altogether at the goalkeeper. They thoroughly enjoyed this! As part of developing their literacy skills, we took these 'My Story' sheets from Beauchamp so that with our 1-1 individual 15 minute sessions, we could together create a story about them and also add a picture of their choice. We did this with all 3 classes and changed some of the football coaching depending on their skills as with the grade 5s they were very good at dribbling and shooting at the goalkeeper. In our literacy activities we started with a naming game so that we could learn the names of everyone in the group and vice versa. We sat in a group and we went round the circle saying our name but the aim of this game was that we had to also say everyone's name before ours so it was really tough towards the end of the circle, though funny at the same time! We travelled back to the hotel and had time to relax; most of us went outside and played some football. After we ate our lovely meal we all played with cards and then discussed how today's activities went and what we would change for the following day, we found that our kids loved the silly stretches exercise and that we would work on some skill work so the next day we thought we would work on passing and more dribbling.

Tuesday 12th October 2010

We saw the same scenery surrounding us as we travelled to Lower Tugela Primary School, we were dead exited to work with the kids the same as yesterday and to do different activities. The kids at this school were absolutely amazing, they were so appreciative and content and were so intrigued as to 'What life was like in the UK?', they found us so fascinating and vice versa. These kids were also really happy as we all walked by saying Hi, and giving them high 5's and hugs, this was definitely a highlight of working with these kids. It also makes you appreciate the lifestyle we lead in the sense of everything, but it also made us realise that what we were doing made an impact as some of us had already received letters and notes from the children. As part of the literacy skill development we carried on working on our 'My Story' with them, most of them were at the stage of finishing their first paragraph and starting drawing their picture. This was a really good idea to do as it also involved us getting to know the person we were working with, in our 1-1 sessions, we found out what their interests and hobbies were which football teams they supported. They also would refer to football as soccer which we would sometimes forget. At the end of the school day, we went back to the hotel, got ready and then it was shopping time! We finally arrived at the Gateway Mall and majority of us bought gifts for people back at home, football shirts and the mighty famous spitfire headphones! After shopping, we had the pleasure of going bowling, where we were separated into 2 teams and we had 2 games of bowling, nearly all of us scored strikes and we also scored the top score of the day and the month, which was quite rewarding! We then went to eat at Nandos.

Wednesday 13th October 2010

By today, we were drilled into waking up early and this also occurred because of the loud waves! If we were lucky to wake up at just after 6am and we drew back the curtains then we could see the dolphins in the sea which made us realise we would never see this back at home if we drew back the curtains! We prepared for the day, as we arrived in our mini-bus at Lower Tugela, all the children gathered round our bus waiting for us to get off so that we could give them high 5s. As part of the football coaching, we worked on throwing and catching in a circle and at the same time shouting their names, they enjoyed this as this was also about timing and teamwork. We also lined them up at the end so that they could all score a goal at the goalkeeper. Additionally, we put them into 2 teams and then we did shuttle

runs in skipping, hopping, running and walking. I think it's safe to say that they definitely have a competition drive! In developing the children's literacy skills, they read their 'my story' and we also started reading short and long stories so it wasn't just easy but also challenging and we took it in turns to do the reading. At lunchtime, we went outside on their playing field, some of us took a football out and the kids went absolutely ecstatic when they saw this, when we shouted someone's name and pointed they had to run to one of us and imagine that a whole group of kids chasing you, this felt absolutely amazing! We also saw some kids playing with the skipping rope, trying to join in and keep in time with them was definitely tricky but good fun! They also made a circle and held hands and skipped round singing a song about the famous soccer player 'Tshabalala', this was definitely an experience to encounter...it was phenomenal! Later on, we visited the Moses Mabida, the Durban football stadium. When we were on the football pitch, as a group we re-enacted our own celebration of a goal being scored on our team which was great fun! This was also the stadium used in some of the football games in the world cup 2010, hosted in South Africa.

Thursday 14th October 2010

We were slightly disappointed today as we had to spend less time with the children but at least we got to see all our classes and then the headmaster of Lower Tugela, Hans, he took us on a tour of Lower Tugela. On this tour, we saw a steel bridge that was significant because the Zulus owned the land on one side of the bridge and the Indians owned land on the other side and in the past they were not allowed to cross to the other side and then after the war, after the conflict, they made a bridge and then they rebuilt it to a solid steel bridge. We also saw the gravestones of the English soldiers in the war and some of us in the countryside got up close to a zebra that was lurking around. Even though we thought we had eaten a meal before we left at the school, Hans said we were to eat lunch at the school which was very kind of him. After this, we made our way to the River Quad Trail where we were separated into 2 groups and we had a 1 hour guided quad bike ride. We did encounter some bumping into each other, stalling, falling over, stumbling and all sorts but most of us had fun on this quad biking experience. On this trail we went up and down hills, we went across bridges and even on a slip of a main road. Some even wanted to experience it again afterwards so that they could go faster! Overall, it was absolutely exhilarating! When we got back to the hotel, we had to pack our suitcases and tidy our rooms, preparing to leave so that we could check out for the following morning. In the evening we gathered all the items we brought from Beauchamp with us to take to the school, there was loads ranging from pens, paper, footballs, football shirts, books and more books! We didn't want to leave, we didn't want the next day to be the last day at the school and we certainly didn't want this to end!

Friday 15th October 2010

Today had approached, we didn't want it to come but it had to! As we left the hotel and on the same journey that we made every day to and from, this was the last journey we would take. Watching the hitch-hikers on their way to work as we went to the school and watching the school kids walking to their schools in their different uniforms. As we arrived, we realised we wouldn't have the same amount of time with our classes like the previous days, so we gave out the letters that we previously wrote to the children we had really gotten to know and we took lots of pictures, gave out email addresses, and we made the most out of it by having fun! We played a mini football tournament, as our both groups, each had a class we wore our football shirts that we bought and we played football in the rain! Lower Tugela Primary School then had selected children that performed songs and dances in their assembly, to our surprise we also received trophies from the school, this made us realise even more that the work we had done was appreciated which made us happy that we had helped these children and they also helped us! We then travelled a 3 hour journey to Isinkwe Safaris Bushcamp which is where we were staying so that it was close to the safari for the following day. Once we arrived, we changed and then prepared ourselves by taking torches for the evening walk, we passed branchy trees and some of us were scared as we were walking in the unknown but at the same time it was quite fascinating in the dark walking with our torches. We then ate and then sat by the open wood fire for a while and went to sleep as we had to be ready for a shocking time of 4:45am the next day!

Saturday 16th October 2010

We met at 4:45am for the game drive at the Hluhluwe game reserve, we then travelled to the safari in our open top jeeps which even though it was a warm day, the wind was gushing in and we did feel quite cold. For the whole day, we used our binoculars to search for animals in the far distance and we also used our cameras and took several

pictures of various animals. We were lucky to see a wide variety of animals really close up and we took a lot of good pictures. We saw a lot of zebras, giraffes, rhinoceros and vultures. The rhinoceros even began to charge us which felt quite surreal to watch as it was literally directly in front of us. We travelled up and down hills and across rivers so we were really lucky to see nature at its best! We were there for over 10 hours and on one of the breaks when we stopped, we saw many monkeys and they even jumped into our vans and others to steal food and scratch windows so these monkeys were definitely very cheeky!

Sunday 17th October 2010

Today was the last day in South Africa and what we all wanted more than anything was to spend another week in the school working with the children coaching football and developing their literacy skills. We checked out of Bushcamp and had a long journey to Gateway Mall where we had a chance to do some last minute shopping and eat lunch and we some of us even sat out in the sun whilst we ate so we could get a top-up for our tan! Afterwards, we went to Durban airport where we had to check in for the flight and made our way to the boarding gate. Our flight took off early evening and then 8 hours later...

Monday 18th October 2010

At approximately 5:30am, we arrived at Dubai airport; we were there for a few hours before our next flight took off, yet another flight delay! After another 7 hours, we arrived at Birmingham airport, where it was just gone mid-day, most of us had been awake for over a day and we were exhausted and felt rough. We collected our luggage and made our way to the mini-bus to go back to Beauchamp.