

Umntana Phambili Programme Report:

A partnership between Airtours & Futouris and the Grootbos Foundation

January 2012 - April 2015

In 2012, the Grootbos Foundation, in partnership with Airtours and Futouris, launched a dynamic project in the rural town of Gansbaai in South Africa that combines sports for children, tourism, the environment and education. The UMNTANA PHAMBILI project was launched on the 9th of January 2012, with a three-year vision. The meaning of the Xhosa project name translates roughly to “children forward” – the aim is for sports not only to become a medium that will literally have children moving forward in terms of running, but also moving forward in life through incredible opportunities. The project has given the communities of Gansbaai, and later, those of Standford and Hermanus, the opportunity to participate in professional athletics coaching programmes and gain access to training opportunities in coaching, tourism and guiding. Beyond athletics, the children receive training as Junior Eco-Tourism Guides, learn more about the environment and conservation, and go on educational excursions that broaden their horizons and educate them about the various eco careers that they can pursue. In recent years, the project has extended to support the training of Senior Field Guides, offering a sustainable livelihood and career path.

Athletics:



Three years ago when we started with the Umntana Phambili project we had determined a clear vision, with set goals and aims. We are pleased to have reached those goals, exceeded these goals, and are still pushing ourselves to do better. With this project we reached and helped more than 1000 athletes per year with professional training and general athletics instruction. Some of these children have never been exposed to athletics disciplines such as javelin, shot put or long jump and it continues to be challenging and incredibly rewarding to help them. We have assisted the schools in our Overberg communities, initially in Gansbaai and then later in neighboring Stanford and Hermanus too, with athletics training and events.

The athletics training programme introduced a new sport to the Foundation's sports programmes and reached out to more children from different ethnic groups, therefore promoting and increasing social integration. The local schools were very appreciative of our support and what we offered the students in terms of training, excursions and education. All the children that participated were given the opportunity to compete in races all around the Western Cape, which was the first opportunity for most of them to leave the local area and compete in other areas. This is a powerful incentive to engage children in sport and to keep them involved and interested throughout the year.

For the first year, 2012, we worked with four local schools in Gansbaai (Masakhane Primary, Blompark Primary, Gansbaai Primary and Academia High). The year of 2012 was a huge year for the community of Gansbaai with the first multi-cultural school opening, Academia High. The Grootbos Foundation is proud to report that we have been in partnership with this incredible, integrated school from day one. After the successes of the project in the first year, we also reached out to schools in Stanford (Okkie Smuts Primary, De Bron Primary) and Hermanus (Lukhanyo Primary).

Our athletics season runs from January to March each year, and Umntana Phambili provides athletics coaching, competitive events and also organizes the schools' Inter House competitions. In 2013 we started a Mini-Olympics day for the younger children, aged between 5 and 7 years. The aim of this was to get the younger kids interested in athletics and to familiarize them with the different events. A highlight on the annual calendar is the Football Foundation's annual Athletics Day, where all the primary schools are invited to take part against each other, instilling a greater sense of competition and achievement.

During the past three years, 42 of the athletes from our programme took part at Provincial level. This may not sound substantial, out of a group of more than 1000 children per year, but these athletes take part in the highest level of competition in their age groups. They get to test their skills against the best athletes in the country!

Cross Country:



From March to September each year we have our cross country season. During this period we work consistently with between 40 - 45 athletes, per season, that attend regular training sessions. This cross country group trains four times per week, from Monday to Thursday and then on Saturdays they participate in trial runs. These athletes never fail to impress our coaches and volunteers with their commitment and dedication. Cross country is an individual sport where the young athletes need to work exceptionally hard and train for long hours in order to achieve.

Annual Cross Country Competitions

- Trial Run 1 - Saturday 17 May Riebeeck Kasteel
- Trial Run 2 - Saturday 24 May Worcester
- Trial Run 3 - Saturday 7 June Ceres
- Trial Run 4 - Saturday 19 July Stellenbosch
- Trial Run 5 - Saturday 26 July Robertson
- Trial Run 6 - Saturday 2 August Grabouw

During the off-season when we have breaks from formal training, Umntana Phambili arranges fun runs to keep the athletes fit. These events add a real life-skills component to the project, as the children get to travel, meet new friends and take part in competitions - all because of this amazing programme! The Grootbos

Foundation also hosts an Annual Foundation Cup - a local Cross Country competition that includes all the schools in our broader area. The Foundation Cup is a highlight for the coaches, athletes, volunteers and families alike. It is always gratifying to see how our participant numbers grow every year.

In 2014, an individual who really excelled was one of our athletes, German Lewis. German took part in the South African Cross Country Championships, held in George, where he finished 11th in South Africa for Boys U/12. During the 2013/14 season he came first in 4 of the 6 Boland Trial runs. We are really proud of this athlete, if we continue supporting him he will have a bright future ahead of him!

Trainee Guides & Junior Guides:



Marco Maarman, Thembisile Mangali, Themba Mangali, (Absent Kailyn Damon)

The foundation does not only focus on sport we also focus on academics, we believe that education is the most important thing for a young athlete. Knowledge is power!

Over the course of the past 3 years, Umntana Phambili has trained both Junior and Senior Eco-Guides, in various FGASA (Field Guide Association of South Africa) certifications.

In the beginning of the programme we identified four junior guides to work towards their Junior FGASA level 1 & 2 certifications. They started the first 6 months shadowing with guides from Grootbos to see how things work and what their areas of interest were. Our first four junior guides, Themba Mangali, Marco Maarman,

Thembisile Mangali and Kailyn Damon have all successfully completed their FGASA Level 1 & 2 certifications.

In 2014 we began using the junior guides to assist with cross-country training sessions in Stanford. It was important to see how they work with younger athletes and how well they communicate. After each session a mentoring session was held to identify where they could improve and where they did really well.

To emphasize the value of community and citizenship, last year the junior guides were asked to come up with a community project and they proposed the idea to re-paint the 'Gansbaai' sign on the side of the mountain. They had to show leadership and organize with the local council to go up the mountain and get permission from the municipality to enter the premises. The guides used the opportunity to take some of the German soccer and hockey volunteers up with them as part of their guiding training.

A number of Senior Trainee Guides have also benefitted from Umntana Phambili's programming and support, with Anchelle, Akhona, Khanyisa, Delano, Daveline and Siyavuyo all graduating with their Senior FGASA Level 1.



Junior Guides and German volunteers

Although the project has run its planned three-year course, in 2015 we are continuing with the athletics and field guiding projects, as per Umntana Phambili. The programmes have become integral core offerings for the Grootbos Foundation, and we are proud to continue to provide these opportunities of growth, hope and fun for the children and families of the Overberg. Sincere thanks to Airtours and Furtouris for three years of generous support and enabling partnership!