

NEWSARTICLE

FICKSBURG JUNIOR LANDCARE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES



Picture caption: The Senior coordinator Ficksburg Junior Landcare Programme welcomes Beneficiaries of the 2024 Ficksburg Junior Landcare Camp.



Ficksburg Junior Landcare Facilitators

A Dedicated Team

As youth unemployment rate is high in South Africa, Setsoto youth Development Organization (NPO) developed a programme for young people who aspire to bring out the best in every situation. Through its Agriculture and Rural development portfolio, the youth development organization established a partnership with the National Landcare Programme in 2018 as an intervention strategy to curb the scourge of unemployment by creating an environment where volunteerism thrives within the Ficksburg Community.

As degradation of the ecological infrastructure impacts local commonages, Setsoto youth Development organization (NPO) facilitated a series of consultations with the local community to establish a local landcare committee to benefit local land users and livestock owners to better understand the importance of good practices towards the Management of Natural Resources.

This dedicated Ficksburg Junior Landcare team saw an opportunity to raise awareness and educate children from an early childhood development stage and the youth about the importance of Managing Natural Resources to benefit future generations.

The era of Awareness and Education

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2018 an establishment of a sustainable partnership between the National Landcare Programme and the Community of Ficksburg a town within Setsoto local Municipality with a good history of Agricultural Heritage and flora was formed as an intervention strategy to encourage the local community of the importance of Managing Natural Resources to enable a conducive environment for the benefit of biodiversity.

Landcare focuses on five (5) key priorities namely:

1. Soilcare
2. Watercare
3. Veldcare
4. Conservation Agriculture, and
5. Juniorcare

The fifth focus area being the most important as it raises awareness and educates the future generation (children and youth in School) to better understand the significant importance of the four key priorities.

As part of the resolutions derived from the 08th Biennial National Landcare Conference in 2018 that was hosted by the Free State Province to establish Sustainable Partnerships for the Landcare programme, the Ficksburg landcare programme created a conducive environment of partnerships and collaborations for the Ficksburg Junior Landcare programme.

With Setsoto Youth Development Organisation(NPO) partnering as Coordinators of the Ficksburg Junior landcare programme, the need to establish Ficksburg Junior Landcare Institute(NPC) was realized to be implementing agents for the Ficksburg Junior Landcare Programme and as a result the collaboration with Pick n Pay School Club was introduced to the programme.

The Junior landcare programme was introduced to the Ficksburg Community in 2020 during difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic through a pilot project in partnership with Meqheleng Primary School.

In 2021, Ficksburg junior landcare facilitated the first junior landcare camp of the Free State Department Agriculture and Rural Development which benefited 160 local grade 6&7 learners from Meqheleng Primary School as a pilot programme.

The objective of the junior landcare camp is to raise awareness through practically educating learners to get a better understanding of indigenous plants and trees, Wetland, water sources and biodiversity at large.

The camp is hosted at SANPARKS GoldenGate at Wilgenhof Environmental centre and by 2024, 160 local learners from other supporting primary schools benefited from the programme. Currently beneficiaries of the junior landcare programme are from the following schools: Meqheleng Primary, Mehopung Primary and Masaleng Primary.



Collaboration with Pick n Pay School Club Programme.

The pick n Pay School club programme has made a significant impact to advancing the objectives of the Ficksburg Junior landcare Programme through its Hero Award programme.

The Pick n Pay School Club Hero Award identifies Heroes within the school premises an award learners for displaying the following values and qualities:

- Courage (Being Brave in the face of difficulty)
- Selflessness(Putting others first)
- Kindness/Caring(to/for people, animals, Plants and the Earth/supportive of others)
- Respectfulness (honoring other people and treating them with dignity and/ or thinking and acting in a way that shows others you care about their feelings and their wellbeing)
- Honesty(speaks truth and owns up when they make mistake)
- Team Player(works well with others in the classroom , and plays fairly on the playground and in sports)
- Environmental Awareness(this new category recognizes learners who display care for the Environment e.g. Picking up litter and implementing the 3R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

This collaboration with Pick n Pay School Club has had a very significant impact as it encourages learners to fulfill the mandate of the Junior Landcare programme by molding learners to have awareness on good practices towards the management of Natural resources.



INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY



In Picture: Mr. Gauda Sithole and Tshepo Mosella

In order for Ficksburg Junior landcare programme Beneficiaries to have deeper understanding of good Practices towards the management of Natural Resources. Ficksburg landcare programme collaborated with Banna Tshebetsong (NPC), an Organization of elderly man with Objective to restore the moral fiber within the local community. This collaboration plays a very significant role to Bridge the gap between the elderly and the youth to foster intergenerational solidarity

ENGAGEMENT WITH PARENTS



In picture: parents of beneficiaries Mehopung Primary school

Constant Consultation with parent of Beneficiaries of the Ficksburg Junior Landcare Programme is what fuels the ongoing spirit of support. It is through these consultation processes that the local Landcare Committee gets the opportunity to assess the positive impact the landcare Programme brings to the Ficksburg Community.

PRODUCING RESPONSIBLE FUTURE LEADER



In picture: Junior landcare beneficiaries (in&out of School)

The Ficksburg junior Landcare Programme benefits both in and out of school youth as Facilitators of the Ficksburg Junior landcare Programme are unemployed young **Volunteers** who have derived passion towards making a meaningful impact within society to advancing the objectives of the National Landcare Programme.