



## Message from Rigby

It's a joy once more to report back to you, our partners and friends in this hope-filled education vision. Along with report backs from the various schools who have benefited from the Bridges education camps, Term 2 has witnessed a strategic new focus, beyond simply a very beneficial learner experience. We have recently proto-typed our first ever EDUCATOR CAMP where teachers from some of our partnering schools, volunteered for a 'teacher reboot' course. It was truly an amazing and rich experience for them all. (More about this, and the specific improvements in both motivation and pupil interaction upskilling later in the report!). We are so encouraged by the feedback from these very valuable agents of change and hope. There is no doubt in our minds that more confident and better equipped teachers are the key to a richer life-giving pupil/teacher interaction. With this in mind we aim to bring stronger intentionality and focus to this conviction going forward. Watch this space.

One last thing. Whilst we continue to do our best to navigate the complexities of the electricity crisis, our education camps are often affected by power outages. It would be truly amazing if we could find a way in the near future to keep the power and lights on 24/7. With this in mind we have begun considering various Solar/Inverter/Battery options. Of course this installation will be a 'game-changer' in the lived experience of our learners, teachers and staff. Undoubtedly this will come at considerable cost (probably around R1.2m installed), but it will also reduce our monthly electricity bill radically. So again, we would like to invite those companies and individuals who see themselves as partners with us in the Bridges vision, to consider teaming with us in this mission critical project. Please be in touch with us if you're able and keen to help!

For all your generosity to date, we are immensely grateful. Enjoy the rest of the report.

Warm regards,

*Rigby*

Chairman of the Board



# Overview of Term 2 Camps

## **CAMP #1 BONGA PRIMARY, GR 6, GUGULETHU**

**No. of Learners: 48  
No. of Educators: 5**

We kicked off Term 2 with the Grade 5 learners from Bonga Primary returning for their Grade 6 camp. They did really well in terms of behavior and participation. The fact that educators have continued supporting learners in their development journey, since the last camp, was evident and meant that learners could more easily progress from 'self-awareness' to 'social awareness' during this camp. This move toward 'social awareness' was seen in the way the learners communicated with each other effectively, showed great sportsmanship, respect and courage during group activities. Overall, it was a very successful camp and the flow from one activity to another was fantastic. The learners also showed a spiritual hunger, choosing to attend the morning motivation and devotion session with the teachers. We look forward to welcoming this group again for their Grade 7 camp in 2024!



## **CAMP #2 CASCADE PRIMARY, GR 5, MITCHELLS PLAIN**

**No. of Learners: 78  
No. of Educators: 5**

Cascade Primary Grade 5 learners displayed enthusiasm, playfulness and teachability, all ingredients for a great camp! Another factor that contributed to the success of the camp, was that educators managed learner behaviour effectively, as they would in a classroom set up and supported the coaches in every activity by being present and engaged. This was our first camp where the school principal attended too. Principals do not usually get to participate in camps because of their workload, so this was special. Back at school, this group of Grade 5 learners will team with the Grade 6 group that have already completed their camp and will hopefully, together, begin to change the school culture through various projects, one being 'keep our school clean' under the watchful eye of our LEAD champion educators. These children come from difficult backgrounds but returned to school and their community with a ray of hope, confidence and appreciation for the opportunity to learn skills through outdoor education.





**CAMP #3**  
**CHRISTMAS TINTO PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**GR 5 (GROUP 1), STRAND**

**No. of Learners: 115**  
**No. of Educators: 6**

This was the first camp with Christmas Tinto Primary, a new Bridges Partner School. The learners come from Asanda Village, a previously disadvantaged community in Strand, where the learners are thriving despite their circumstances, because of the dedication of the principal and relentless support from the staff. The camp activities were tough for the children, but they endured and ended well, completing every challenge that was set before them. The values of trust, respect and courage were displayed throughout their camp experience, which was beautiful to see. This group in particular have dreams and ambitions, which came through strongly in their self-portraits, during the arts activity. This was a really fun, enriching and enjoyable camp.



**CAMP #4**  
**JOOSTENBERG PRIMARY, GR 6,**  
**JOOSTENBERG VLAKTE**

Sadly, this was a rather difficult camp. The educators unfortunately failed to manage the learner's behavior effectively, which meant that the coaches had to spend more time addressing behavioral issues than on the actual camp activities. Not all the learners were unruly, but those that were had a tremendous negative influence. This experience highlights again the need for educator support and learner behavior management at camps. The Ed team will engage with Joostenberg leadership about the way forward, so that this is not repeated in future.

**No. of Learners: 93**  
**No. of Educators: 5**



**CAMP #5**  
**BERGENDAL PRIMARY, GR 5 & 6, PAARL**

**No. of Learners: 93**  
**No. of Educators: 3**

This camp was an absolute blast! The learners came to camp well prepared by their teachers, to learn, engage and enjoy the experience. They were energetic but listened and adhered to the guidelines around activities and followed instructions well. The learners completed the obstacle course really well, and with team spirit and good sportsmanship. They assisted the slower paced learners along the course which the principal noticed was a positive change in the learner's behavior, after they attended their first camp in 2022. There was continued learning and personal development demonstrated on camp, with servant leadership qualities noted by the coaches. This school is a great example of how the programme is impacting learners' social-emotional well-being.



## **CAMP #6** **CHRISTMAS TINTO PRIMARY SCHOOL** **GR 5 (GROUP 2), STRAND**

**No. of Learners: 81**  
**No. of Educators: 4**

This camp was in general successful because of educator support and engagement that was evident. Educators from this school had just attended the educator camp the previous weekend (more about this below), which meant that they were clear on the camp outcomes and understood their role in supporting the learners to achieve these outcomes. Learners enjoyed the activities and games and gave positive feedback about their camp experience.



## **CAMP #7** **ELNOR PRIMARY, GR 6, ELSIESRIVIER**

**No. of Learners: 75**  
**No. of Educators: 4**

Elnor Primary learners were a pleasant group. This Grade 6 camp focused on social awareness. The educators were supportive and displayed an understanding of the vital role they play when on camp. Learners were well behaved, including some of the historic trouble-makers. The group showed great team spirit and good sportsmanship. The addition of new sports equipment and board game resources proved a valuable investment. The group could be divided into smaller groups than usual in some activities, which made the learning around the activity more intentional; and because of this, the learners could engage more and express their thoughts and feelings honestly. Key indicators of a successful camp programme – that learners develop a trust connection with the coaches and that they learn how to manage themselves in terms of self-awareness, were evident. The only major challenge was the weather... which does impact outdoor activities at this time of the year, as indoor space is limited. However, with the innovation and creativity of the team, the camp was a success.





# Educator's Camp

In May, 24 educators from six of our partner schools participated in the first ever Educator Camp at Bridges! This camp was at their request, after seeing the camp impact on their learners, the educators were eager to develop in this area themselves. The schools contributed towards the costs for this, out of their WCED professional development budgets and fundraising efforts. The camp was specifically designed for educators and included team building activities and interactive workshops.

The main objective of the camp was for educators to understand the importance of learner participation in the classroom, the impact of adult support in the learning journey and the need to positively influence the school culture. Educators were taken through the LEAD\* model (which was used for the prefect camp too) as a foundational tool. They also engaged in sharing best practices for teaching and learning in the classroom.

*\* Training material is based on the LEAD leadership model, originally developed by Ezra Community Training and Development NPC ([www.ezrah.co.za](http://www.ezrah.co.za)) and used with permission.*



**Educators feedback was that the camp was highly impactful on both a personal and professional level, positively impacting their teaching methods and mindsets. This is what they had to say;**



“I made a mind-shift and I feel that in order to make a change in the system, it must start with me. This was very personal for me. I got my groove back. My first love why I became a teacher. Being an agent of change in a child's life (in my class or school)”

“I am value driven and also have personal issues I have to cope with. The Lead module will let me have more confidence to stand in front of my class and not just teach the subject but the child. It will allow me to have more positive relationships with my learners.”

“Being here really ignited the person inside me and I'm looking forward to go back to my school and change those young lives”

“I believe that the educators should implement LEAD in their/ our classrooms as a value that will teach our learners to love, to look after/one another and remain positive in every aspect of their lives”



### Educator feedback continued...

“Lead was very personal for me. I had made a mind-shift at the camp. I discovered that I must be the agent of change in my school community”

These skills from the module are what we as educators want to encourage and develop in learners and it's the same skills they will need and that we need now to be our best and to also model/demonstrate to children and create environments where those skills are a norm and are valued”

“It showed me what I've been missing what my mind was closed to or too busy to see. It helped me change my attitude and be inspired by the role of leadership and it inspired me to become the facilitator of leaders in my class and school”

“Changing my attitude towards learners. They are from different families and that they don't learn from someone they don't like”

“As a mother, I also I know that I need to upgrade my parental skills. Like learn to listen to my own children and not always be a monster mother”

“I learned to get my own life in order as an educator, to look through the eyes of a learner”



## Total Impact So Far

### IMPACT: TERM 2, 2023

- CAMPS: 7
- LEARNERS: 584
- EDUCATORS: 33
- MEALS PROVIDED: 4319

### IMPACT: YEAR TO DATE

- CAMPS: 16
- LEARNERS: 1316
- EDUCATORS: 75
- MEALS PROVIDED: 9737





## Thank You

Thank you to each one of you, our generous donors and partners in this exciting journey. We are grateful to see the Bridges vision in full swing, with another term of life impacting camps having taken place. Your support has enabled us to reach 1316 learners already this year, with another 18 camps planned for 2023. We are right on target to complete 34 camps this year. It is also exciting to see the effect the camps are having on educators, who in turn have the opportunity to positively affect their entire school community. Bridges camps are igniting little fires of change in hearts and classrooms all over the province, what a privilege to be part of this.

We look forward to a busy Term 3, more camps, more lives impacted and the arrival of Spring in the beautiful Franschhoek valley.

Please continue to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for regular updates, photos and stories throughout the year.



**Website:** [www.bridgesretreat.co.za/education-programme/](http://www.bridgesretreat.co.za/education-programme/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/BridgesEduCamp/](https://www.facebook.com/BridgesEduCamp/)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/bridgesoutdoorcamp/](https://www.instagram.com/bridgesoutdoorcamp/)