



FORESTRY SOUTH AFRICA

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MIDLANDS MEANDER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

NCT

NCT FORESTRY CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED



MIDLANDS MEANDER
EDUCATION PROJECT



FORESTRY EXPLAINED: OUR *HUMAN* LEGACY

Introducing Midlands Meander Education Programme

A Bug's Life!

Jessica Dreamtime
Project Coordinator



"In a nutshell the Midlands Meander Education Programme (MMEP) is designed to bridge specific gaps within the education system through meaningful hands-on teaching methodologies that support and aid teachers, parents and learners.

We use a range of creative and often unique techniques to inspire, including calling ourselves bugs and dressing up as such!

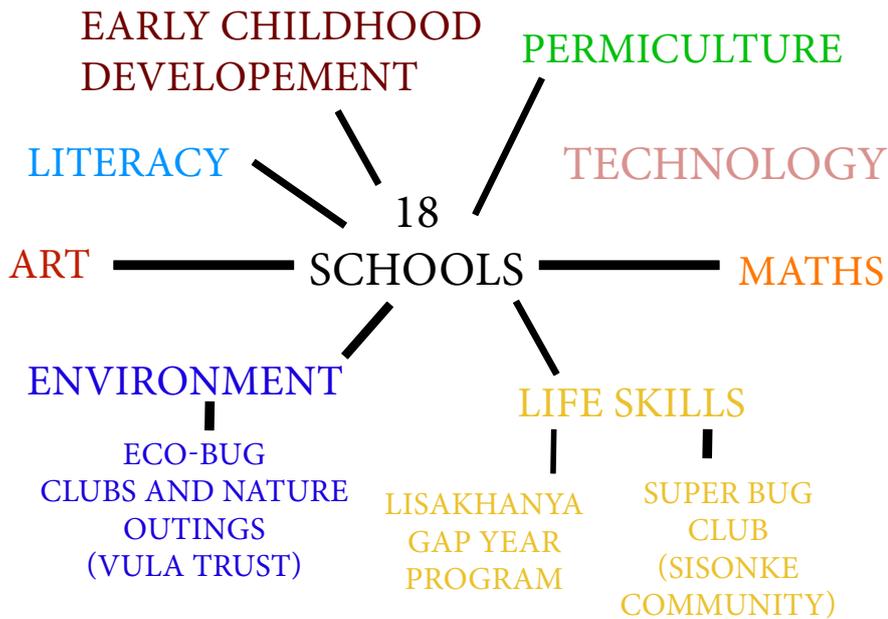
We try to relate everything we teach in theory to a practical application to make it relevant and meaningful in real life and encourage learners to reflect on everything they learn. We believe the best way to bridge education gaps is to inspire the love of learning.

We therefore promote independent thinking, wise decision making, reading, writing and learning for fun. It's about encouraging a sense of active citizenship taking responsibility and positive action for oneself and others."

A Nutshell: The Core MMEP Concept

THE MIDLANDS MEANDER EDUCATION PROJECT

CREATIVE, INNOVATIVE,
HANDS ON EDUCATION



The MMEP is about making learning fun and relevant and is achieved through partnerships.

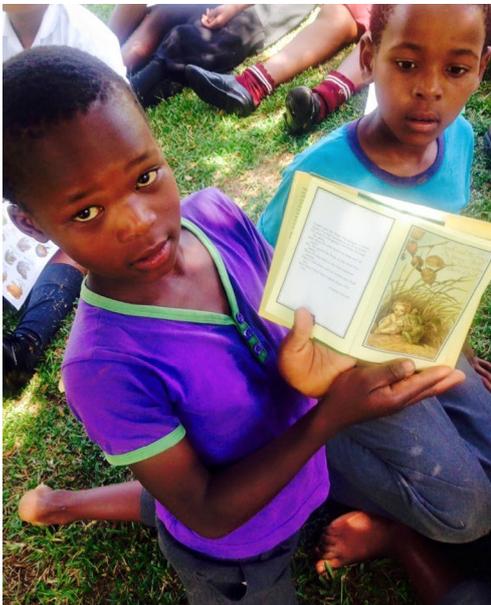
The Education Programme focuses on 8 key areas, ranging from Art to Technology, and is taken by the MMEP Bugs to 18 Midlands Schools.

In addition to this, there are three community partnership that provide additional support. Lisakhanya Gap Year Programme, the Super Bug Club and the Eco-Bug Club.

The Midlands Meander Educational Programme



We have seven wonderful 'Bugs' who are also passionate education facilitators, each is responsible for a different aspect of our educational programme. This is then delivered by our bugs once a month to 20 different schools in the Midlands area. We use a variety of specially designed teaching methods, to convey each lesson. The only condition - it must be fun!



The Lisakhanya Gap Year Programme

One of the sad things we quickly noticed were how many promising learners just dropped off the grid after finishing school. They simply didn't have the skill sets employers were looking for. We wanted to change that with an 11 month gap year programme that provides promising learners with the skill sets they need to become employable. Lisakhanya students are coached and mentored through an intensive programme of a very high standard. At the end of the course successful graduates are given references and are invited to subscribe to our Job Café database, for potential employers to view.



The Eco-Bug Club

We are so proud of this club as it illustrates that what we are doing is working! The Eco-Bug Club is for learners wanting to do more. Once a month they meet up over a weekend and do additional environmentally orientated activities. I really believe this is inspiring the next generation of conservation heroes. Children who will make huge differences in their communities.



The Super Bug Programme

We designed a programme called the Super Bugs, where we provide vulnerable children with a space that they feel safe in and where they can get the help they need. When Super Bugs graduate from the programme, (after a year of helpful educational interventions), they become Super Buddies who get involved in community projects and support other Super Bugs wherever they can. This group is supported by a community network who help with referrals – so we can make sure children with specific needs get the right help. This framework is really effective and is so successful that it is being replicated elsewhere.

Forestry's Role?

Forestry co-operative NCT Forestry has contributed hugely to the success of a number of MMEP projects, both financially and through donating tools. They have allowed us to establish vegetable gardens in several schools. As well as running Teacher Workshops.



Why Community Gardens?



Permaculture, thinking and living are our cornerstone philosophies. So it makes sense to facilitate schools in developing vegetable gardens using permaculture principles.

Permaculture encourages systems thinking, produces nutritious food and ensures that the school feeding scheme is supplemented.

Some schools have taken it a step further and shown real entrepreneurship, by selling, or bartering, the excess crop and/or seed, seedlings and cuttings to offset the costs of other lunchtime staples.





NCT Forestry represents hundreds of medium scale forestry owners across the country. Their money has enabled MMEP to buy essential shade netting and gum poles. Without these maintaining a viable vegetable garden would be impossible for schools like Corrie Lynn.

The Bigger Picture

“Since we have had the vegetable garden, absenteeism has decreased. You must remember a lot of our learners come to school without any food. For some, our 10 o’clock lunch is sometimes the only meal they will get. Thanks to the garden, we can make it bigger and more nutritious than ever before. Cutting hunger and improving learning. So thank you!”

Thenjewi Ngcobo - Head Teacher