

VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THE MAVERIC PROJECT

The MAVERIC (Medical and Veterinary Rural Integration and Collaboration) Project is a joint initiative between the Faculty of Veterinary Science and the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Pretoria. The project aims to offer primary health care to people in the community as well as to pets and animals in the vicinity.

Opportunity description

People in the communities of Itireleng do not have the necessary means to provide primary animal health care to their pets. We used MAVERIC as an opportunity to step in and provide health care to animals (especially pets) in and around the community, under the supervision of a qualified veterinary professional, while also providing basic primary medical care to people in the Itireleng (Laudium) community. The integration of animal and human health care falls under the One Health initiative and in the future we hope that the project will progressively evolve into a multidisciplinary initiative. As previously stated, we also focus on educating adults and children about pet health, hygiene, and habits. We do this so that when we later move onto the next community, we know that the previous community has the knowledge to care for their pets. This outreach also enables students to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired through their various

academic courses to actively help and empower rural communities, whilst gaining an understanding of different community dynamics and an appreciation for community engagement.

Impact

The impact made is seen over the long term. We worked in this community last year and when we returned this year, some owners still brought their vaccination card from the previous outreach. The children still remember what was taught to them from the previous outreach. By committing to performing more than one outreach, as well as planning on committing to the same committee in the following year, we plan to work on helping the community of Itireleng to develop over the long term. We plan to impart knowledge; not just hand out goods to members of the community as charity.

Community partners

Itireleng community, Faculty of Health Sciences, namely the medical and dentistry students, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Temba Clinic and Hill's Pet Food Company.

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