

VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

I WANT TO BE A VET WEEKEND

The “I-Want-to-Be-a-Vet” (IWBAV) project was initiated to expose and provide learners, especially those from underprivileged communities, with more information about the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria. Additionally, the aim is to encourage learners to seriously consider veterinary science as a career.

Opportunity description

This event is not a normal community engagement project as the event spans over an entire weekend, with Saturday being the most jam-packed day. This project was started in 2010 by veterinary students who saw the need to create awareness and interest in veterinary science, which is immense among the greater South African population. Efforts are focused on learners especially from rural and disadvantaged communities. It is hoped that the learners will return to their communities to educate and assist their peers – first, after the project, then during their veterinary studies and finally once they qualify as veterinarians.

Many of the learners that attend the weekend have had no previous exposure to large and/or production animals, e.g. cattle, sheep and horses, while some of the learners have had no experience with

companion animals such as dogs. Through the various activities carried out at the stations, this project aims to expose learners to these animals.

Impact

The impact of IWBAV is definitely noticeable as one will see that the same learners who attended IWBAV are now enrolled at the Faculty of Veterinary Science as either veterinary or veterinary nurse students.

According to the Specialist Senior Student Advisor, when a follow-up took place two years ago to evaluate how many high school learners actually applied to study veterinary science, it was found that 60 to 70% applied. However, it is important to note that some learners do not make it due to selection or financial challenges.

Community partners

Junior Tukkies, Hill's Pet Food Company, Staff members of Faculty of Veterinary Science, and Kwalata staff.

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