

Environmental Science & Technology 2018

March 29-31, 2018
Vienna, Austria

Queline Bersiks, J Environ Res, Volume 2

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA EMISEBENI PRIMARY SCHOOL GREENING PROJECT: MOFOLO PARK, SOWETO, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA

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In 2013, University of South Africa (Unisa) and Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) started a joint venture to conserve and improve Mofolo Park in Soweto, Gauteng South Africa. The park has been partially rehabilitated, but in need of additional investment. The Department of Environmental Sciences, Unisa and the JCPZ Environmental Education team collaborated to start working in schools bordering Mofolo Park. The aim of the project is to enhance environmental learning through informed environmental responses. Contextual profiling was done using questionnaires at six schools. Two considerations needed to be taken into account when selecting the school, which was; which school would gain the most from our project implementation and which school would be able to sustain our project when we exit from the school for them to run the project on their own. The data which was collected indicated that Emisebeni Primary School was ideal to implement the project. Prior to project implementation informal interviews, discussions and observations took place at the school. During the informal interviews, the principal of the school and other staff members, who were involved with existing environmental projects, were consulted. Post to project implementation, data was collected using questionnaires to measure classroom

learning and the environmental awareness impact of the project. Action projects created an opportunity for the learners to get out of the classroom. This experience enabled them to look at practical examples to reinforce theoretical teaching in the classroom. Areas that link to the curriculum included: water conservation, healthy living, environmental respect, tree planting and plant requirements and maintenance, ecosystem studies, entrepreneurship and community involvement.

Biography

Queline Bersiks is a Lecturer at the University of South Africa, in the Department of Environmental Sciences specifically in Ornamental Horticulture. She has been the Ornamental Horticulture programme co-ordinator for two years and has been involved in curricula design for open distance education students. For the past four years she has been the departmental representative for community engagement which is where one of her passions lies. She graduated from the School of Horticulture, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew scholarship programme in 2004. Currently she is pursuing Master of Science in Ornamental Horticulture focussing on the propagation of the medicinal plant *Helichrysum rugulosum* for its' commercial horticultural potential in Gauteng, South Africa.

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