

## **WITS CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH CENTRE FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Wits Citizenship and Community Outreach (WCCO) in the Centre for Student Development (CSD) promotes student community engagement in the form of volunteerism. Volunteering enriches the lives of Wits students by educating them about and connecting them to the needs of their community across campus, the country, and the world.

Wits students are involved in a range of projects ranging from working as volunteers on campus, in their own communities, in other communities; with children, youth or the aged; for causes as diverse as sustainable development, literacy, social justice, child welfare, the fight against poverty, animal rights or disability awareness.

WCCO Volunteer projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals

**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



### **Good health and wellbeing**

WCCO Rural Camp - WCCO facilitated a week-long rural camp from the 19th of November to 25th of November 2023 with student volunteers from the Allied Health Professions category providing needed services in the villages surrounding Dennilton, a town in Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo. WCCO partnered with the Ndlovu Care Group, a large health NGO that has operated in the district for more than 27 years. The Ndlovu Care Group's work focusses on healthcare, child and youth needs, infrastructure support and research for improved cohesive community development. Wits volunteers provided a range of interventions including oral health awareness, audiology screening, pharmacy health screenings, speech therapy, mental health awareness and a work readiness intervention with unemployed youth. The student volunteers included three oral health students, three audiology students, four pharmacy students, three speech pathology students and two social work students.

Fifteen student volunteers conducted a total of 972 screenings, provided to at least 680 people who visited the sites. Wits' student volunteers provide much needed support in resource deprived areas.



**New Nation School Project** - This student volunteer led initiative aims to effect meaningful change within our immediate community, particularly at the New Nation School, which faces significant challenges. The school exemplifies the issues that afflict many public primary schools in South Africa, including insufficient funding, inadequate waste management practices, and a lack of essential resources to create a conducive learning environment, such as adequate chairs, desks, computers, and a well-equipped library. Additionally, the school requires extracurricular activities that can positively channel students' energies away from their hardships and address the prevailing culture of substance abuse that affects both the school and its surrounding community. This project is designed with a five-year timeline, from the initial phase of implementation to the realization of tangible change.

Wits volunteers are currently working with the school initially focusing on the introduction of sustainable waste management practices, urban gardens, and tutoring. This project commenced with an Arbor Day celebration held on September 9, 2024. Twenty Wits students facilitated educational sessions on waste management and recycling, discussed the importance of trees and gardens. These activities were followed up by a school wide clean up campaign that led to the collection of approximately 100 refuse bags of waste

Volunteers also secured sponsorship of trees and plants and involved learners in gardening activities and the planting of 3 nectarine trees, 3 peach trees, 4 avocado trees, 10 succulent plants, 15 different species of flowers, and 3 shrubs. This project was a collaborative effort involving WCCO volunteers, Pikitup, and the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment (DFFE).

Wits volunteers hope to have a long term relationship with New Nation school to help make an impact on learners from the local school.



## Sustainable cities and communities

**Green Cities** is a student volunteer led initiative that aims to promote cleaner and greener cities through working with inner city partners, including local government, private stakeholders and schools. Students are involved in clean-up campaigns aiming to raise awareness about the importance of effective waste management practices in urban spaces. Two significant inner-city clean-ups were conducted in partnership with Pikitup and #JoziMyJozi. These included a cleanup of Braamfontein where 100 students collected 200 refuse bags of waste and another clean up in Hillbrow where more than 1000 refuse bags of waste were successfully removed.