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Sanibonani! Hello from South Africa with a heartfelt welcome!

You might have been wondering what's been going on at Vuk' Africa Tours since our Christmas newsletter update. Here's the latest.

As the year 2011 began, we managed a few significant changes rather smoothly: After two years of tirelessly contributing to Vuk' Africa's effectiveness, Katie Blundy finished her assignment in January and returned home to Australia. We salute and appreciate Katie's sacrificial contributions; we wish her the very best with her future endeavors.

Thereafter, Hanna Botzkowksi (*right*), from Germany, joined our staff, taking the role of Vuk' Africa's marketing manager. We're very happy to have Hanna aboard; we welcome her passion and amazing talents.

Change is always good for a reason. Since Vuk' continues to maintain renewed marketing power, we're happy to report that it's built up a variety of brand-new donation partners, as well as advertising and media contacts, while developing critical tourism cooperation and partnership relationships. Such cooperation has already enabled Vuk' to increase its numbers of tours, which we'll continue to do now with these strong networks.

More great news: Nosipho, our local staff member who regularly served as Vuk' Africa's administration and finance manager, was promoted to general manager. Thankfully, Nosipho has been and continues to be a wonderfully reliable staff member.



Good news comes in threes: After Katie's departure and Hanna's arrival, Thulile Msomi (left), from South Africa, joined our organisation. Placed by Tourism World Academy to gain more experience and knowledge by working at a sustainable tourism agency, Thulile now takes . . .



. . . care of Vuk' Africa Tours' packaging and optimization, while also taking responsibility for all our guided tours.

Thankfully, workable plans continue to arise for us at Vuk' Africa Tours. Vuk' is very fortunate and grateful to have three new, qualified staff members on our team — big warm welcomes go to Hanna, Thulile, and Nosipho, in her new position.

Left to right:
Thulile, Hanna,
Nosipho, Vusi



Marketing and Networking – New Achievements

Vuk' Africa Tours is now actively cooperating with Dutch and German tour operators. What's more, Vuk' will be featured in July on the front page of one of the Valley's new, regional-tourism advertising brochures, likely to draw the attention of regional guesthouses and B&Bs to Vuk' Africa Tours. As a result, reliable financial support for Vuk' Africa's trust fund and its diverse social projects is "waiting around the corner."



Vuk' tourists enjoy as they learn.

Besides increased business, media, and donor contacts, we're pleased to have successfully partnered with the University of KZN, which will help us accommodate large numbers of groups. Add to this achievement the cooperation we're now getting from Cape Town's central accommodations and travel agencies. We're very pleased!

There's more great news. After a long, drawn-out application period in February, Vuk' finally became a registered member of TKZN (Tourism KwaZuluNatal). If you're in the area, please come by so that we can meet you and hopefully work together soon. Many thanks go to Katie Blundy and the entire Vuk' Africa team for accomplishing this valuable achievement.

It won't be long before we'll start our big promo-tour. Be aware of this development; we might come around and invite you to partner with Vuk' Africa.

Developmental Outcomes

As most of you already know, we launched our new trust fund in August 2010, established to raise funds that would be distributed to a variety of organisations that focus on education, building family, youth, life skills and leadership development, HIV/AIDS, and crime. To date, our trust fund supports three needy institutions: our community's Thokomala Orphanage, Beyond Self Scholarship Project, and NGO Light Providers.

Thankfully, the increased number of tours and visitors sheds bright light onto Vuk' Africa's trust fund. More tours means more income and increased affect. *(Continued on page 3)*

We're slowly becoming empowered to consistently improve the outcome of our social work while achieving positive developmental outcomes in a sustaining manner.

But there never seems to be enough support given to kids and people in need. Knowing how much our children will become our future leaders, and that *Ubuntu* isn't merely an empty word for us, Vuk' Africa and its partner, Tim Brown Tours, jointly conceived a new project idea that would hopefully manage to supplement our trust fund with long-lasting, ever-increasing funds. As a result, we'll address officials at schools and other institutions by encouraging all to jointly collect substantial funding.



A local Zulu family

Project details will be provided in due course. Today, we simply ask you to be pleased with the potential of this new partnership. We'll soon create a promotional video that highlights this project's purpose and goals. Please stay tuned.

Also keep in mind Vuk' Africa's "Beauty of the Valley" beads project that generates income for local artists and bead craft people who sell bead accessories locally at big events and conferences. At some events, as many as 3,000 pieces (right) are sold.



The "Beauty of the Valley" beads project has been active for nearly two years but needs a bigger driving force to support it. If you're considering the launch of a big event, please seriously consider inviting our local bead artists — they need the business revenue; their appearance will likely complement what your event will offer. Please contact us at any time — we'll do our very best to help close the social circle by providing fair-trade products for you and your event's participants.

Sneak Preview It won't be long before Vuk' Africa Tours starts its big promotional tour. Be on your guard — we might invite you to partner with Vuk' Africa.

Thanks Go to Our Loyal Sponsors



Thankful recipients of NAB's big donation.

Vuk' Africa Trust Fund is thankful and very happy to announce that it has received 24 laptops from National Australian Bank (NAB). The equipment was distributed to two partnering organisations: (1) Light Providers Youth Club, which aims to expose young people to their inherent potential by providing recreational activities, life skill programmes, and skill-development training, and (2) Children's Home Thokomala, which is home to 25 orphans living in this community. (Continued on page 4)

NAB's generous donation was timely. Nosipho, now our general manager, had lost an extensive amount of important Vuk' office data when her computer broke down a few weeks ago. Receipt of new computers saved her and Vuk' from a very pricy "mission impossible" that would have required her to unproductively spend much time and effort attempting to find a new medium on which to do all her work. We thank you, NAB, very much!

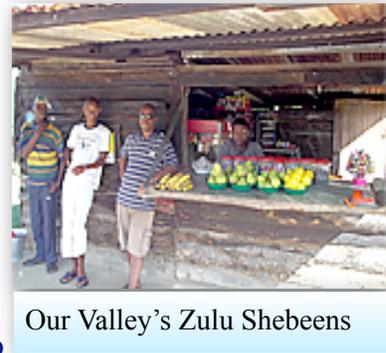
South African Impressions

A brand-new newsletter section premieres with this issue. It'll include a lineup of articles that present personal impressions from people who daily share life as South Africans.

Our first impression, proudly presented by a Vuk' Africa volunteer, is titled "Lifestyle South Africa":

"The first impressions led us into inner confusions about different life livings, cultures, wealth standards, safety and crime, electrical fences and easy going 'key guards' [the ones you commit your car keys to while enjoying the beach and ocean], the understanding of effective working and time management and much more. You could call it culture shock.

"Even if I've been to South Africa before, it's now that I feel that wealth standard differences so immense strongly. Living in the wealthy area of Hillcrest, and working just around the corner in the disadvantaged, *semi-rural* community KwaNyuswa, has brought me into doubts. Considering my being rich and white [though I'm not at all rich], one who daily enters poor people's lives as if I were crossing a border [physically and mentally] is difficult for me. But I must first learn to accept the way things are here in South Africa. Thereafter, I'll start moving." — Hanna Botzkowski



Signing Off

Until next time, *salani kahle* (stay well). From the Vuk' Africa team,

Hanna (author), *Thulile*, *Nosipho*, and *Vusi*

Not merely a tour operator, Vuk' Africa is a cultural tourism organisation that seeks to empower, develop, and showcase developing communities in South Africa.