



ANIMAL VOICE

SOUTH AFRICA

THE HUMANE
EDUCATION TRUST
CAPE TOWN SOUTH AFRICA

Animal Voice Issue 89 | Compiled and edited by Louise van der Merwe | Design, Social Media and Schools Outreach by Erika du Toit

**Legal minds, academics and community leaders
reflect on the landmark move to recognise animal
welfare within the Rights of the Child...**

**...a global step towards
nurturing children's
empathy, compassion
and fundamental sense
of self-worth.**

e^ditorial

Greetings to our valued readership

*This issue of **Animal Voice** is a fervent appeal to leaders in Government, in Education and in Policy to bring into the schools' curriculum a subject that regenerates our trust in each other to be decent towards all living things.*

*As my late husband would have said (and he put it mildly): **'Hurting another being, whether human or non-human, spoils 'n mens se oujaar'**.*

We appeal to the powers that be to heed the advent of [GC26, paragraph 35](#) into the Charter of Child Rights. As you will see from the content inside, countries around the world are already doing just this, and a plethora of the finest minds add their unwavering support and the reasons for their unwavering support.

In one of the articles, data scientist Andreas Schleicher suggests that the advent of AI should push us to think harder about what makes us human. If we don't, he says, the world will be educating second-class robots and not first-class humans.



Compiled and edited
by Louise van der Merwe



Design, Social Media and Schools Outreach
by Erika du Toit

*So let's unlearn human entitlement.
Let's reconstruct education so that our learners gain an understanding of our interconnectedness and interdependency with all other living beings.*

Let our children matriculate with the badge of Proudly Human.

Please forward this magazine to others who may be interested.

***Please donate towards
our efforts, no matter
how small the donation.***



With appreciation,

Louise van der Merwe

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The Case for High School *Animal Sentience* Education: Student Demand is 100%

A recent short survey among first year university students revealed **100% consensus that **animal sentience** should be taught in high school. This compelling result underscores a significant educational gap: **74%** of participants reported having matriculated with **no knowledge of the concept of animal sentience.****

See page 4, 5 and 6

VOICES FOR ANIMALS

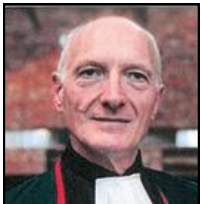
**A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH THOSE WHO SPEAK OUT LOUD AND CLEAR
FOR ALL WHO ARE BORN NONHUMAN**



Dr Sharyn Spicer
Lecturer in Sociology
University of the
Western Cape



Dr Clair Linzey
Deputy Director
Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics



**Retired Justice
Edwin Cameron**
Formerly a justice of the
Constitutional Court of
South Africa



Malcolm Plant
Founder
The European Link Coalition



Chad Nathan Cupido
Founder
Dr Phil-afel Foundation for
Plant Powered People



Professor David Bilchitz
Professor of Fundamental Rights
and Constitutional Law
University of Johannesburg (UJ)
and University of Reading, UK



Dr Adam Cruise
Respected South African
environmental journalist



Professor Ann Skelton
Professor at Law,
University of Pretoria



Professor Sandra Swart
Professor and Chair
Department of History
Stellenbosch University



Amy P. Wilson
Executive Director,
Animal Law Reform
South Africa



**Revd Professor
Andrew Linzey**
Director
Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics



Noël Sweeney
British Lawyer specialising
in human rights and
animal law



A lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Dr. Sharyn Spicer is one of Africa's most compelling voices for animals

When *Animal Voice* editor Louise van der Merwe first met her, Sharyn was already determined to rescue every feral cat on campus and its surrounds. She went on to found the TufCat Project, becoming an inspiration for a kinder world to countless members of the UWC community.

This year, to mark World Animal Day, Dr Spicer invited Louise, as Director of [Nature-based Education](#) (NBE), to present NBE's module on [Animal Sentience for Senior Phase Learners](#) to her students.

Dr Spicer kindly agreed to speak further about Sentience as a crucial component in Education...

Animal Voice:

Dr Spicer, it was a pleasure to present our Lesson Plan to your students. Thank you. The questionnaire that the students filled in at the end of the presentation was eye-opening! 74% of them had matriculated without any knowledge of animal sentience, yet 100% were in favour of including animal sentience in the senior phase curriculum. Would you agree that the [analytics](#) of the questionnaire indicate there is a gap that needs urgent attention in our CAPS curriculum?

Sharyn Spicer:

Yes, there is a clear need to include animal sentience in the curriculum. However, animal welfare needs to be linked to the concept of social justice to have an impact. Recognising sentience gives animals intrinsic value and challenges their property status. The inter-connections must be emphasised and linked to issues like poverty, environmental degradation and the rights of marginalized populations.

Animal Voice:

The reasoning behind the recent inclusion of animal welfare into the Charter of Child Rights was of particular interest to the students. ([See GC26:35](#)) How do you see this historic step manifesting in education?

Sharyn Spicer:

The majority of people are not ready to accept that animals have rights because this would be way too uncomfortable and would require significant societal changes. Many people feel that supporting animals and animal causes somehow takes away from humans and their struggles. They fail to see the interconnections.

Animal Voice:

In a 'first' for the African continent, students at UWC will now have the opportunity to study animal rights at LLM (Master's) level. UWC also has a Sociology post-graduate module focussing on Human-Animal Studies, which is also a first. What an achievement! How do you think we should go about getting Animal Sentience into the mainstream curriculum as a component of the Matric syllabus?

Sharyn Spicer:

It needs to be integrated into all subjects and linked to other social issues and concerns to have an impact. For example, activities could focus on the language we use regarding animals. What is important to note is that advances in animal welfare and rights are coming from poor countries in the Global South like India, Pakistan and South American nations.

Sharyn Spicer:

These countries have recognised the value of animals and support the ‘Rights of Nature.’ They are setting the tone for other nations to follow. In South Africa, we need to find ways to extend the African concept of *ubuntu* to include other species. There are scholars who are doing this and their work needs to be promoted.

Advancing animal rights and improving their welfare needs to be seen in the context of decoloniality. Colonialism created the species hierarchy and oppressed and exploited animal others, hence part of the decolonial project should be to undo this.

MODULE ON ANIMAL SENTIENCE

See Survey Analytics overleaf



What happens when Artificial Intelligence (AI) gradually takes over many of the jobs that keep us busy now, appropriating our livelihoods and purpose, and leaving us stranded in our own comparative deficiency?



The solution, say leading economists, lies in actively cultivating in our children that special thing that sets us apart from AI, the very thing that makes us uniquely human – our capacity for empathy and creativity. If we don’t, says German data scientist **Andreas Schleicher** who heads the Education Division at the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#), the world will be educating “second-class robots and not first-class humans.” Schleicher believes our education system is a relic of the industrial age.

He explains: **“The kind of things that are easy to teach, and maybe easy to test, are precisely the kinds of things that are easy to digitize and to automate.”**

The advent of AI should push us to think harder about what makes us human... our capacity to take responsibility, to mobilize our cognitive and social and emotional resources to do something that is of benefit to society.”

[SEE HERE](#)



Courtesy: OECD website

Student Survey Insights:

Why Animal Sentience Education is Essential

The questionnaire completed by Sociology students at UWC was a powerful indictment of the current curriculum and a clear mandate for change. The results reveal a strong desire to discuss complex, ethical issues surrounding our relationship with non-humans.

SURVEY FINDING	RESULT	KEY IMPLICATION
<i>Exposure to Animal Sentience</i>	74% said high school did not afford them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with animal sentience.	Curriculum update is needed to address a basic concept in modern ethics.
<i>Animals as Resources Only</i>	84% said animals were primarily discussed as resources, not as sentient beings.	The curriculum promotes a purely utilitarian view of animals.
<i>Interest in Scientific Recognition</i>	98% said they would have been interested in learning about the scientific recognition of animal sentience (e.g., the major international conferences in 2005/2006).	Students are keen for a science-based, up-to-date view.
<i>Desire for Ethical Discussion</i>	93% said they would have been interested in a structured discussion on the ethical double standards regarding pets versus equally sentient farm animals.	Students want to analyse moral consistency in human-animal interactions.
<i>Recognition of the 'Us vs. Them' Mentality</i>	100% said exposure at high school to the 'us' and 'them' mentality regarding ourselves and animals would have encouraged an interest in animal welfare.	Early intervention is seen as a <u>key way</u> to foster compassion and breakdown speciesism.
<i>Legal and Moral Implications</i>	91% were not presented with the opportunity to study South Africa's 2016 Constitutional Court judgment that recognised animals as sentient beings with intrinsic value .	There is a lack of knowledge about significant national legal precedents.
<i>Critical Thinking Preparation</i>	100% said they would have liked the opportunity to analyse complex ethical issues (trophy hunting, animal experimentation, etc.), believing it would have been good preparation for critical thinking at university level .	Sentience education is viewed as a valuable tool for developing advanced academic skills.
<i>Value of the Lesson Plan</i>	98% said the Lesson Plan on Animal Sentience, as presented, would have been a valuable addition to their senior phase education.	Overwhelming endorsement for this specific educational module.



A GLOBAL ICON FOR JUSTICE TAKES THE LEAD, AND SPEAKS OUT AGAINST HUMANITY'S TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

In an urgent call to action, retired *Justice Edwin Cameron*, former Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch, and former Justice of the Constitutional Court, pointed a finger at industrialised agriculture for its role in the plight of starving children in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province.



As keynote speaker at the 5th International Social Justice Conference held in Cape Town on 17 October 2024, Justice Cameron was one of a number of South Africa's respected leaders, brought together in a unified bid to reach the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.

"What is hunger?" he asked. **"It is not just 'feeling hungry' which is a desire for food that expects and anticipates fulfilment. Hunger is different. Hunger is a gnawing, debilitating, preoccupying daily presence. It haunts the daily lives of millions of people, and menaces their very being."**

Yet, he said, according to a 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, 27% of South Africa's children under the age of 5 are stunted from undernutrition; 3% are wasted and 6% are underweight.

In the Eastern Cape Province, the number of children suffering from severe and acute malnutrition had more than doubled over the last 18 months.

Additionally, he added, 9 million of the 13 million school children in South Africa, **"are dependent on school feeding schemes for their one and only meal of the day."**

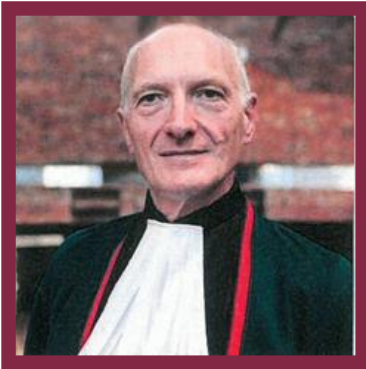
"How can this be?" he asked. **"Despite the fact that we are a middle income country, we have a wretchedly high rate of hunger in South Africa. Why is it that we produce enough food to export, and yet our people go hungry?"**

Justice Cameron referred to a report by UN Special Rapporteur, Ms Hilal Elver, on the Right to Food. It stated: **"The current industrial agricultural model has serious disadvantages. It generates food loss and waste, mistreats animals, emits greenhouse gases, pollutes ecosystems, displace and abuses agricultural fishery workers, and disrupts traditional farming communities."**

The financialisation of the food system, said Justice Cameron, was also a contributory factor. Instead of alleviating the wretchedness of people in the grip of hunger, South Africa exported more than half of its maize harvest – 53% – for animal feed. In a global context, a third of the world's grain, and two thirds of soya, maize and barley were used for animal feed.

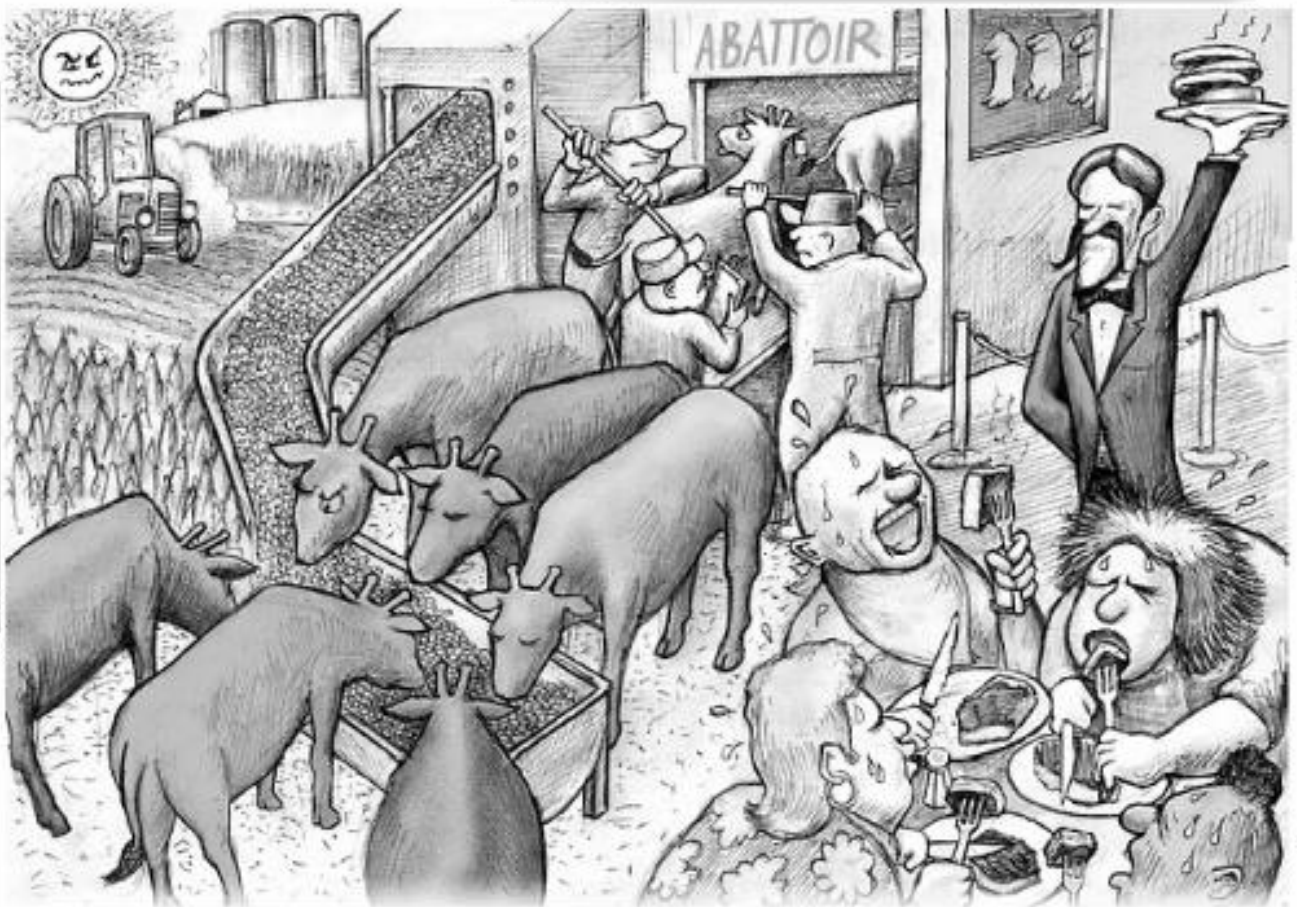
"And it is worrying and perplexing that our government seems to have a master plan to increase the amount of meat for export, rather than to feed the children just a few hundred kilometres away in the Eastern Cape."

See more overleaf...



“Though animals are capable of experiencing immense suffering, and though humans are capable of inflicting immense cruelty on them, the animals have no voice of their own. Like slaves under Roman law, they are the objects of the law, without being its subjects.”

<https://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZASCA/2008/78.html>



“One of the simplest ways to eliminate hunger is to eat less animal flesh.”

– Justice Edwin Cameron



CHAD CUPIDO IS AN IMPRESSIVE FORCE FOR CHANGE!

Armed with a degree in Journalism and dual MBAs from France and Taiwan, Chad is the founder of the [Dr Phil-afel Foundation for Plant Powered People](#). He also serves as Executive Officer at [Beauty Without Cruelty](#) and is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of the Western Cape. The list of his achievements is long, but for this *Animal Voice* feature, we focus on his commitment to justice for animals through education.

Animal Voice:

Chad, welcome — and thank you for joining our Voices for Animals. May we start with your childhood and formative years. Where did you grow up and how did your commitment to animals begin

Chad Cupido:

I was just another curious skinny boy growing up on the Cape Flats, part of a tight-knit coastal community where family and faith shaped daily life. But sometimes, I would escape the confines of family life and run down to Muizenberg beach where I would race against the wind and feel every step of the sand beneath my feet. The ocean became a sanctuary for me. It was also my teacher. The waves taught me perseverance because nothing could prevent them from relentlessly rolling up onto the shore. The horizon taught me unspeakable wonder and a sense of mystery still to discover.

Muizenberg was also the home of my Khoi Khoi ancestors. It was there that I found freedom, peace — and my spiritual compass.

Animal Voice:

Please tell us about Roger and the impact he had on your life.

Chad Cupido:

Yes, sometimes it takes the loss of someone for you to know what love is. Roger was my cat. He was a big orange Garfield look-alike. He was killed by two neighbourhood dogs. I buried Roger myself. That was when I understood that compassion cannot be selective. The heartbreak of his death planted a seed in me that would define my life's work.

Animal Voice:

A few years later, you watched [Earthlings](#), a documentary narrated by Joaquin Phoenix that exposed humanity's exploitation of animals for food, clothing, entertainment, and testing.

Chad Cupido:

Yes. It broke me open. For weeks, I couldn't sleep. It was as if I had entered a darkness and had awakened within it. Sometimes you have to go into the dark to understand the light.

Animal Voice:

You say you emerged from the darkness with a new understanding of the word 'enlightenment'.

Chad Cupido:

I saw the truth and the weight of the responsibility that accompanies the privilege of awakening... of enlightenment. It was like a voice calling me to action. Awareness without action is a form of paralysis. Out of all that pain, I found purpose.



Animal Voice:

*Today, you are executive officer at **Beauty Without Cruelty**, and founder and CEO of the **Dr Phil-afel Foundation**, a non-profit dedicated to plant-based living and environmental stewardship through humane education.*

Chad Cupido:

Yes. After all, education isn't about information. It's about transformation. For instance, our Beauty Without Cruelty **Troopers** introduces children to nature, animals, and the concept of sentience. Many of the kids we work with have never seen beyond what it is to be disadvantaged. But we leave them in no doubt that they belong to something sacred.

Animal Voice:

One of the intriguing things about you, is that you are a member of the [Gorachouqua Tribe](#), one of the historic Khoikhoi lineages of the south-western Cape. Your lineage can be traced back to one of the original indigenous Bushmen tribes who occupied the Cape when Jan van Riebeeck arrived in 1652.

Chad Cupido:

I am truly fortunate to have this lineage. It has given me so much of my spiritual compass. In indigenous understanding, animals are relatives, not resources. True indigenous practice isn't about domination. It's about reciprocity and living in balance.

That's why I speak about moving away from ritual slaughter to ritual salvation where instead of taking a life to honour our ancestors, we save a life in their honour.

Animal Voice:

What an absolutely wonderful life-affirming concept of deep and sacred respect. I think it is a concept that the authors of 'Africa and her Animals' (published by the University of South Africa), would agree with.

[\[Page 7 Education Rewired July 2019\]](#)

Chad Cupido:

The Dr Phil-afel Foundation for Plant Powered People has also come into being at the right time. I believe we are entering an era where people can understand that indigenous practice and veganism are two expressions of the same truth – reverence for life. In modern society, we have normalised cruelty. Our challenge is to awaken compassion and reverence for all life.

When I meditate on Muizenberg beach at sunrise, when light turns the sea to silver, I am reminded that spirit exists in all beings – ourselves, animals, plants, even the wind. There is no hierarchy in creation. Only relationship. Once you see spirit in all things, you can never unsee it. Every heartbeat matters. We are called to reawaken humanity.

Animal Voice:

You say that the sand and the waves, the salt and the wind of Muizenberg beach are their own kind of music. They carry the hum of stories as yet untold.

May the untold stories you speak of, manifest to become part of our children's heritage.





Trade Secret is a powerful exposé of the polar bear fur trade between Canada and China.



South African environmental journalist Dr Adam Cruise spent six years contributing to the footage in this film. Now it has been premiered at the *Climate Film Festival in New York* and Dr Cruise shares more of the story with Animal Voice.

Animal Voice:

Welcome home! You and your fellow filmmakers dedicated six years to capturing footage for this exposé. The film reveals the shocking slaughter of polar bears in Canada, with around 800 – 1,000 bear skins exported annually to China at USD 80,000 each. How utterly horrifying, all the more so because polar bears are listed as a vulnerable species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Adam Cruise:

The film uses stark and arresting visuals, such as close-ups of polar bears and auction footage, along with a powerful score, to highlight the tragic contrast between the bears' wild beauty and their exploitation as a commodity. Reviewers so far have describe the film as moving and emotional.

Our documentary is notable for an organic plot twist that uncovers how some of the very organisations and governments entrusted with protecting the species are entangled in its continued commercialisation. This revelation will come as a genuine shock to many viewers.

Critics and audiences agree that Trade Secret is an important and essential film that needs to be seen by a wide audience. It raises critical questions about the nature of conservation and motivates viewers to reconsider how they view the world of wildlife protection.

We won the overall award at the festival for best documentary as well as the Audience Choice Award.

Animal Voice:

Wow! Congratulations! When can we see it?

Adam Cruise:

We are hoping to have this film picked up by the big streamers such as Netflix. We are also thinking of doing an African premiere of the film in Cape Town in November. For now, the trailer can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kd1uLSEqCs>

Animal Voice:

In your doctoral thesis, you argue that humanity must breach the “insuperable line” (as coined by the 18th Century philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham) that we have drawn to separate ourselves from other animals.

Adam Cruise:

Yes, we must dismantle this yawning chasm – this abyss between ourselves and all other living beings. We must shift away from our parasitic exploitation of animals. This begins by taking a sober look at ourselves. We don't have the memory of an elephant, the scenting abilities of a dog, or the navigational genius of birds. These are forms of intelligence beyond our own. Humans do indeed have extraordinary capabilities – but uniquely among species, we also have the power to destroy and desecrate.

“

*...humanity must breach the
insuperable line*

Animal Voice:

Would you say the “insuperable line” not only separates us from all other animals, but also fundamentally separates those of us who believe animals have intrinsic value and deserve to live free from human harm, and those of us who view animals merely as commodities for exploitation – or as vermin, if deemed useless?

Adam Cruise:

It sure does. Non-human animals should not be valued solely for their benefit to humans or ecosystems but should be acknowledged as beings with their own interests, lives, and capacity for flourishing. Conservation that focuses only on “sustainable use” or “population management” reduces other animals to numbers, disregarding individual welfare.

Recognising intrinsic value shifts the ethic to one that respects other animals as ends in themselves. Approaches that justify killing elephants, lions, or rhinos for economic gain (e.g., trophy hunting, ivory trade, culling) fail ethically because they overlook the intrinsic worth of each individual animal. Policies that take intrinsic value seriously would prohibit exploitative practices. Instead policies would favour co-existence, non-lethal management, and respect for animal autonomy.

**Driven from her habitat
Struck on the face by a
paintball
Tormented by an
outrageously big collar**

**Animal Voice:**

A case in point is the ongoing conflict between baboons and several communities in South Africa’s Western Cape. According to baboon antagonists, the baboons are the intruders and aggressors.

Adam Cruise:

The truth is quite the opposite. We have driven baboons from their natural homes and food sources – the equivalent of *forced removals*, to borrow the language of apartheid. Even the language we use against non-humans reflects dominance and subjugation.

Think about it...

1. **“Stock” or “livestock”** – Reduces sentient beings to economic units, implying they exist primarily for human profit.
2. **“Game”** – Frames wild animals as targets for sport rather than as autonomous creatures.
3. **“Pest”** – Justifies lethal control of animals deemed inconvenient, erasing moral consideration.
4. **“Harvest”** – Often used in hunting or culling contexts, implies animals are crops rather than lives.
5. **“Problem animal”** – Labels creatures in conflict situations (like elephants near farms) as obstacles rather than sentient beings.
6. **“Resource”** – Positions wildlife as commodities for human use, whether in tourism, meat, or trophies.
7. **“Population”** (in ecological management) – Focuses on numbers instead of individual welfare, enabling mass culling or sterilisation.
8. **“Vermin”** – Dehumanises or delegitimises existence, historically used to justify extermination.

These terms shape perception and policy, making ethical transgressions against animals seem normal or necessary. By changing language to emphasize individuality and sentience, humans can cultivate a conservation ethic that respects animals’ intrinsic value.

We are the ones who created this antagonism because we want to take more and more – and more – of the environment for ourselves.

Animal Voice:

*In her compelling book **The Lion's Historian**, Stellenbosch University historian Professor **Sandra Swart** argues that human history is incomplete without acknowledging the role of non-humans. She reminds us that our shared history with baboons includes eons of good neighbourliness. For example, they guided us to edible roots and tubers; they were our sentinels. Only with the advent of farming, and the easy pickings it provided, did this neighbourliness sour. She suggests our prevailing attitudes toward baboons would likely shift overnight if they were suddenly discovered to hold a secret vital to human survival. What are your thoughts?*

Adam Cruise:

As Professor Swart notes, if we are ever to bridge this “insuperable line,” we must “fathom the dark ecology of the human heart” and recognise that animals are profoundly sentient beings with cultures of their own, just like ourselves.

Animal Voice:

At the Climate Film Festival, was there any sense of progress – any softening of the “dark ecology of the human heart” toward the wild non-humans who share this journey of life with us?

Adam Cruise:

Almost every film and every person there believes in recognising the intrinsic values of non-human animals, and champions their full protection amid this burning planet of ours.

Animal Voice:

So do you believe there is hope?

Adam Cruise:

Yes, I do. Consider the global ban on the ivory trade...

- In recent years, I was part of several groups and individuals that successfully lobbied several countries to strengthen domestic ivory bans to curb poaching and illegal trade. The UK's Ivory Act 2018 (enforced in 2022) prohibits almost all ivory sales, while China ended its domestic ivory market in 2017.

- Hong Kong followed in 2022, banning commercial trade including pre-1990 ivory. In the US, federal law restricts ivory sales, though some state-level measures, such as New York's stricter ban, have faced legal challenges. These measures collectively reduced demand and protect elephant populations globally.
- By documenting the capture methods of baby elephants for export to China, publicising the welfare abuses, and lobbying international regulators, my evidence and articles in National Geographic and The Guardian – of calves being forcibly separated from their mothers and the high mortality rates that followed – helped galvanise public and political pressure. Ultimately all of the above contributed to CITES restrictions and Zimbabwe's suspension of live elephant exports, effectively halting the trade.

These victories prove that sustained pressure works. Momentum is building, and the pressure must continue.

Animal Voice:

We thank you.



HERE, DR CRUISE GIVES HIS EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF A TROPHY HUNT IN NORTHERN KWAZULU NATAL:



“A child was present – about 16 years old. His father proudly explained that his son had been shooting animals since he was three.

This is how it unfolded... It wasn't about tracking or stalking. Instead, the Austrian tourist and his son booked into a 5-star lodge overnight. The next morning, after breakfast, dressed in safari gear (and ironically wearing Crocs), they joined others on a safari vehicle, guns fitted with silencers and telescopes.

Suddenly, the tourist spotted his prize: a magnificent antelope with massive horns, browsing peacefully. He signaled for the vehicle to stop. He stubbed out his cigarette, took aim, and fired. The shot wasn't clean. The buck fled, leaving a trail of blood. Trackers followed and returned 20 minutes later, dragging the dead animal back, blood seeping out from his mouth and nose.

They wiped the blood off his face, then propped his head on a mound of sand, and staged photo-graphs. For me, it was a grotesque celebration of murder.

GC26:35 is a monumental step forward in the UN's Child Rights framework. Recreational hunters are now firmly in the spotlight for a complete ban.”

Footnote

Adam Cruise's doctoral thesis, [“Delinearizing the insuperable line: deconstruction as an animal ethic”](#), calls for a fundamental transformation in how humans perceive and relate to the natural world – shifting from parasitic exploitation to genuine symbiosis.



Charter on the Rights of the Child

GC26 : TROPHY HUNTING

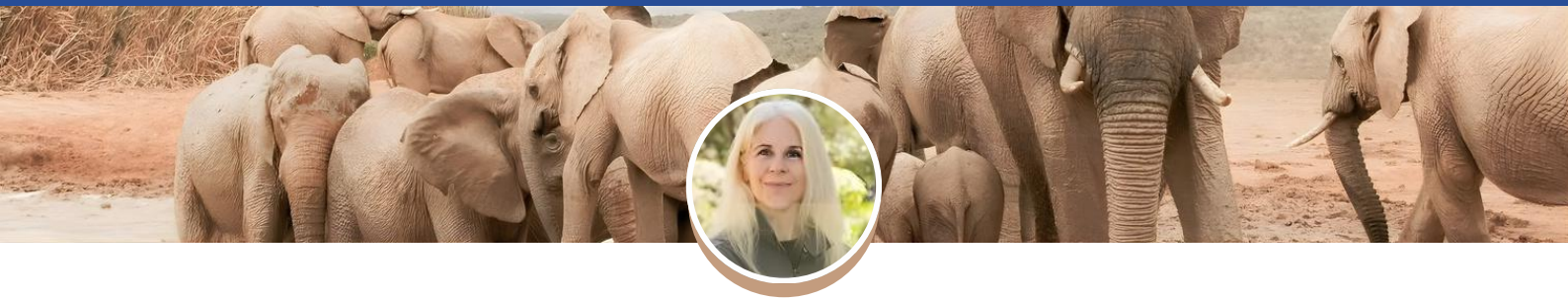


On 8th February 2024, at the United Nations' 95th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Vice-Chair Dr Rinchen Chopel urged the South African delegation to criminalise the practice of allowing children to participate in trophy hunting.

He said: **“GC26 has made a significant break-through. Various psychological studies on violence and animal abuse have shown that witnessing or participating in violence can severely impact children's moral and psychological development, normalizing violence, and conditioning life-long negative behavioural patterns. The popular and societal acceptance and practice of child participation in animal trophy hunting is horrendous to say the least.”**

*Killing animals for the fun of it —
South Africa*





HOW BIG TUSKERS BROUGHT CALM AND PEACE TO A GROUP OF TRAUMATIZED AND UNRULY TEENAGE ELEPHANT CALVES!

In 1981, nearly a century after the last East Coast elephant was shot for its tusks in the ivory trade of the time, South African wildlife conservationists endeavoured to return elephants to their original territory in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve (now Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park) in KwaZulu Natal.

By 1996, almost 200 Kruger National Park juvenile elephants had been transferred there, all were orphans younger than five years of age, survivors of culling of their families. But something went terribly wrong. The youngsters did not behave as expected. They broke fences and chased cars and people. They came into musth far too early and could not keep their aggression in check. They attacked and killed scores of rhinos. Things got so bad that some had to be shot.

But, as **Sandra Swart**, Professor and Chair of the Department of History at Stellenbosch University, explains in her fascinating book *'The Lion's Historian': We now know what went wrong.*

"They were living with chronic stress caused by the slaughter of their families in front of them, and their removal to a strange place..."

Latest research suggests African elephants call each other by name!

[READ HERE](#)



"Their behaviour was comparable to that of humans who have experienced deep trauma. They had lost their culture. There were no older elephants to teach them how to be an elephant. We now know, that matriarchs carry the herd's wisdom and that the older males enforce polite society. Without these teachers, the little band of orphans were lost..."

"In 2000, in an effort to restore order, a squad of 10 adult bulls were introduced from the Kruger National Park to put an end to the teenage craziness. It worked!... The juvenile delinquents learned from their elders and became respectable citizens."

Professor Swart believes animals are key to how humans understand the world. She contends that learning or rather relearning from deep history to live with wild animals in close proximity, brings a new understanding whereby conservation does not try to separate the human and the so-called wild through old-school 'fortress conservation' that excludes and evicts. Rather, she suggests, conservation can be decolonized with a completely new approach.

"There are creative ideas coming out about how best to manage coexistence."

For more on this fascinating subject, read:
The Lion's Historian

[SEE HERE](#)



THE WORK OF THE HUMANE EDUCATION TRUST IS ACKNOWLEDGED INTERNATIONALLY

A ground-breaking new international resource titled the *Palgrave Companion to Humane Education* is to be dedicated to Louise van der Merwe, editor of *Animal Voice*, director of the online platform naturebased.education, and Managing Trustee of The Humane Education Trust. **What an honour and heartfelt thanks!**

Due out in 2026/2027, the *Palgrave Companion to Humane Education* is one of the first resources of its kind to introduce the concept of how we treat animals as a vital component of Education everywhere. Published by Palgrave Macmillan, it is edited and compiled by the **Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics**.



Here, Reverend Professor Andrew Linzey, Director of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, and a member of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford for more than 28 years, agreed to talk to *Animal Voice*.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Animal Voice:

Reverend Professor Linzey, you first graced the pages of Animal Voice way back in 1994 when you held the world's first academic post in theology and animal welfare at Mansfield College, Oxford.

*Your book **Animal Theology** had just been published and we were eager to hear your call for humanity to take action to promote animal well-being. You said traditional liberation theology had been grotesquely human-centred and that true liberation theology would embrace every being suffering oppression.*

Prof Linzey:

Yes, changing perceptions is a difficult and arduous business. People seldom want to think through their assumptions or confront their own prejudice. It is challenging to change comfortable habits both of mind and body.

Animal Voice:

*In an interview you did with *Compassion in World Farming*, you said that without a change in our perceptions, there really can be no future for the animal welfare movement.*

Prof Linzey:

Yes. Campaigns, strategies, petitions, demos – all the paraphernalia of activism are of course essential, but by themselves can seldom, if ever, bring about the necessary change of perception. If one looks at similar reforming movements, for example, for the abolition of slavery, or the emancipation of women, or more recently, Apartheid in South Africa, we can now see with hindsight how essential the foundational insight that motivated these movements were. Change came about with an evolving perception that equal value and dignity belonged to all human persons, black or white, male or female.

Animal Voice:

And when it comes to animals?

Prof Linzey:

What the animal movement is about is a changing understanding and renewed perception of the intrinsic God-given worth of each and every individual sentient being. Our task is to encourage, invite and even exhort people to look upon animals as more than what is commonly thought to be an 'animal'. Each such creature is a living, sensitive being worthy in its own right, irrespective of what it can give to us.

Animal Voice:

Is it a kind of spiritual awakening then?

Prof Linzey:

Yes but by 'spiritual' I do not mean organised religion. I mean a changed and heightened consciousness of the divinely given worth of creation and an abhorrence of cruelty as something evil in itself.

Animal Voice:

You found a kindred spirit in our Anti-Apartheid icon and Nobel Peace Prize laureate,

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. *In fact, Archbishop Tutu wrote the foreword to your incredible 323-page resource titled [The Global Guide to Animal Protection](#).*

In the foreword, Tutu wrote: “Our dominion over animals is not supposed to be despotism... If it is true we are the most exalted species in creation, it is equally true that we can be the most debased and sinful. This realisation should give us pause... Churches should lead the way by making clear that all cruelty – to other animals as well as human beings – is an affront to civilized living and a sin before God.”

Should churches help lead the way, much more than they do?

Prof Linzey:

Yes, absolutely. As Helen E. Jones remarked “the Church should be a leader in the movement for the protection of animals but it isn’t even in the procession.” Apart from luminaries like Archbishop Tutu, Christian leaders have failed animals by failing to speak out. This is a matter of great pain to me.

Animal Voice:

It seems that, step by step, the LAW itself is forging a new perception of justice for animals.

As Deputy Director of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, and Professor of Animal Theology at the Graduate Theological Foundation,

Dr Clair Linzey, your daughter, has recently announced an Animal Ethics and Law Partnership between The Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics and George Washington University Law School.



Do you think we can safely assume that, ultimately, the law will bring some sort of justice to our kin who are shaped differently?

Prof Linzey:

Well that has to be the goal. We need laws that will provide protection for all sentient beings. The problem is however that law works by inches and we have so much work to do to see our vision implemented.

We also of course need humane education at all levels. In this your work has led the way in remarkably difficult circumstances. I congratulate you on your pioneering endeavours. May they all be powerfully supported.

Animal Voice:

Thank you. I value your kind words. Back in 2018, Amy Wilson became South Africa’s first lawyer to graduate with a Masters Degree in Animal Law from the prestigious Lewis and Clark Law School in the USA.

As director of Animal Law Reform South Africa, and a member of George Washington’s Aquatic Law Project, I understand she was one of the presenters at your Summer School held at Merton College, Oxford, in August.

www.oxfordanimaethics.com

Prof Linzey:

Yes, Amy represented a South African perspective on aquaculture at the Summer School. She spoke brilliantly on the panel “Aquaculture: The New Moral Frontier.”

People simply do not realise how much cruelty there is in the farming of aquatic life, especially in the exploitation of octopuses.

Animal Voice:

Thank you, and may we pay special tribute to you for the changes in human perception that have been wrought worldwide by the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics.

More overleaf...

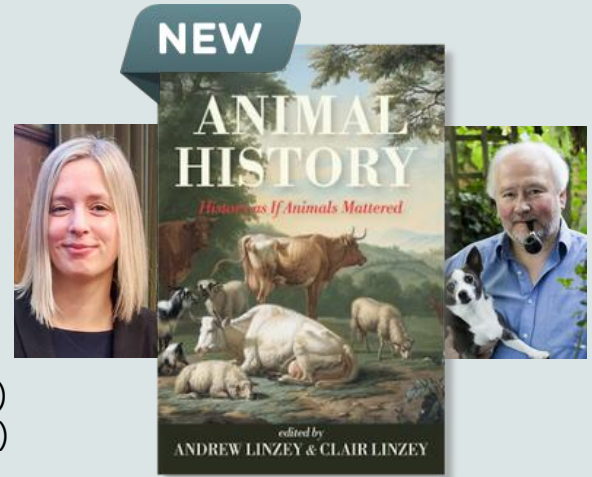
Animal History,
the latest book edited by
Revd Professor Andrew Linzey and
Dr Clair Linzey, is now available.

[Order HERE.](#)

Journal of Animal Ethics

Books include:

Animal Theology (SCM Press/University of Illinois Press, 1994)
Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society (Routledge, 1996)
After Noah (Mowbray/Continuum, 1997)
Animals on the Agenda (SCM Press/University of Illinois Press, 1998)
Animal Gospel (Westminster John Knox Press, 1998)
Animal Rites (SCM Press/The Pilgrim Press, 1999)
Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology (Columbia University Press, 2005)
Creatures of the Same God (Winchester University Press/Lantern, 2007)
Animals and Christianity: A Book of Readings (Wipf and Stock, 2008)
Why Animal Suffering Matters (Oxford University Press, 2009)
The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence (Sussex Academic Press, 2009)
Other Nations: Animals in Modern Literature (Baylor University Press, 2010)
The Global Guide to Animal Protection (University of Illinois Press, 2013)
The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)
The Handbook of Religion and Animal Ethics (Routledge, 2018)
Ethical Vegetarianism and Veganism (Routledge, 2018)
An Ethical Critique of Fur Factory Farming (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)
Animal Ethics and Animal Law (Lexington, 2011)
Animal Theologians (Oxford University Press, 2023)



Louise van der Merwe was invited to
present Humane Education's
pioneering work at
Forest Heights Primary School
to an international audience at
the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics
Summer School, back in 2019.

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The inspiring outcomes of this
pilot project are now included in the
Palgrave Companion to Humane Education,
due out 2026/2027





Malcolm Plant is founder and director of the European Link Coalition and the World Link Coalition.

Malcolm and his team's ground-breaking research at Teesside University led to an historic 'first' whereby the United Nations now includes animal welfare in the Child Rights domain.



Animal Voice:

Malcolm, what you have achieved has literally revolutionized the world. GC26 has elevated Animal Rights into the Human Rights domain, and as such, initiates one of the biggest steps in history for child and animal protection.

Malcolm Plant:

It is a new awakening which recognizes the scientific fact that a child has an innate and natural compassion and empathy for the animal world, and that it is conditioning that teaches them about divisions, prejudices, abuse, violence and cruelty.

If we dare to imagine a world where the natural empathy of the child is retained into adulthood, then compassion for all other living beings is not eroded by the greed and politics of broken humanity. In this way, children are our leaders into a new tomorrow.

Animal Voice:

Please tell us more about your research at Teesside University.

Malcolm Plant:

Our research at Teesside University focused on Eastern Europe. We found, for example, that a staggering 86.3 percent of teenagers in Romania, thought it was 'normal' to see homeless animals being abused or killed.

On completion of our [research](#) we took our findings to the UN and, as you know, the Committee on the Rights of the Child took them very seriously.

Animal Voice:

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has also identified the negative impact of exposing children to bull-fighting, trophy hunting, and a host of other atrocities against animals to which children are exposed.

Malcolm Plant:

Yes, as explained earlier, this can impact on a child's affective empathy and introduce a normalisation of violence. The World Link Coalition is fighting tooth and nail against atrocities like these, as much for the sake of the child as for the animal.

Animal Voice:

*UNICEF in South Africa has its own website devoted to **violence against children**. The role of animal welfare in the Rights of the Child needs to be included.*

Malcolm Plant:

Very much so. The psychological harm to children that we are talking about, is at a fundamental level of child development and is potentially irreversible. The UN has quite literally elevated animal well-being into the human rights domain for the first time in history, placing an obligation on every member nation to bring an end to violence in all its manifestations. UNICEF is mandated to support the 'legally binding' UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We need to elevate awareness of *The Link* to a national and cultural concern everywhere.

Animal Voice:

Thank you for your steadfast and ground-breaking work towards a better world.



David Bilchitz

is a Professor of Fundamental Rights and Constitutional Law at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and University of Reading in the UK

He is also director of the **South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public, Human Rights and International Law (SAIFAC)**. He was the first full-time academic in over 20 years to be appointed as an acting justice on the Constitutional Court from February to May 2024. Additionally, he is co-founder and director of **Animal Law Reform South Africa**, and has been involved in both academic contributions as well as practical efforts to advance the interests of animals in South Africa and globally.

Animal Voice asked Professor Bilchitz to comment on the United Nations' inclusion of animal welfare in the Child Rights domain [\[GC26: 35\]](#).

Professor Bilchitz:

I think this is a very important development. Animals are very much affected negatively by all kinds of actions by humans but sadly, are often absent from international law frameworks. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issues a ground-breaking General Comment (interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of Child) relating to children's rights and the environment. As part of that General Comment, the Committee found that **“children must be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence and from exposure to violence, such as domestic violence or violence inflicted on animals.”** (Para 35).

The committee here does a number of important things. It firstly recognises that animals can be subject to violence which can be inflicted on them. That recognition is important in conceptualising many forms of human behaviour against animals as 'violence'. It is also important in that the word 'violence' implies that this behaviour is wrong in itself.

Secondly, the Committee recognises the interconnection between humans and animals: the exposure of children to violence against animals harms the children themselves and can cause trauma for their future development. Importantly, this recognises the similarities that exist between us as fellow creatures.

Lastly, the committee gives two examples: of domestic violence and violence on animals - they are not automatically the same, of course, and some violence against animals takes place outside the domestic environment. However, it has been demonstrated, in empirical studies, that there is a vital link between abuse of animals and abuse of women and children in the home. For that reason, Dr Sheena Swemmer (whose PhD I supervised) has recommended including violence against animals in the home as a grounds for protection in the Domestic Violence Act. It seems to me that that proposal is consonant with the recognition by the Committee of the interconnection between forms of violence.

For all these reasons, the inclusion of the statement regarding animals is important but, in my view, only an initial step.

I hope that UN treaty bodies build on this recognition to go further in the inclusion of animals within international law frameworks and also recognise that their interests matter in their own right rather than simply because of the effect on humans.

“

...exposure of children to violence against animals harms the children themselves...

Quantum Leaps for Change

The North African country of Morocco has proposed a change to its laws in compliance with the UNs' legally-binding [General Comment 26:35](#) whereby children may not be exposed to violence, including violence against animals.

This follows decades of horrific management of stray dogs by shooting them in the streets, and is now to be outlawed with mandatory prison sentences and/or fines for anyone who “intentionally kills, tortures, or injures a stray animal in any manner”.

It is understood that FIFA played a role. FIFA stipulates that candidate nations wishing to stage FIFA events must be compliant with International Human Rights Law. GC26:35 brings animal welfare into the human rights domain through the Rights of the Child.

(Information is courtesy of the [European Link Coalition](#))



Photo courtesy: Ajit Solanki/AP

South Africa has been requested by the UNCRC to ban the practice of allowing children to witness trophy hunting. *Animal Voice* wrote an [open letter](#) to Minister of the Environment Dr *Dion George*, alerting him to the need for South Africa's compliance.

GC26 : TROPHY HUNTING

Colombia has also responded to GC26:35 by **banning bull-fighting**. Colombian President **Gustavo Petro** announced: ***“Death will no longer be a show”***.

Mexico City — Mexico City lawmakers have voted overwhelmingly to ban violent bullfighting, triggering outrage from aficionados and celebration from animal rights advocates. The legislation, approved by a 61-1 vote, prohibits the killing of bulls and the use of sharp objects that could injure the animals. It's down to a 30-minute red cape challenge after which the bull must be returned safely to his herd. Traditional bull-fighting, in all its violence and cruelty, has been entertainment in Mexico City for five centuries.

Now, no more, thanks to GC26:35. **©CBS NEWS**



Do snails know that they are creatures eating from the forest floor?



Are animals not only sentient, but conscious too?

An article in the October 2025 issue of **Neuroscience News** points out that the outcome of this question has major ethical implications regarding who we have to care about morally, and could ignite serious conflicts of interest.

As your *Animal Voice* editor understands things, sentience and consciousness are not the same. While a slug may retract to the touch of a stimulus (implying the presence of feeling/sentience), is it aware, on the other hand, that it is a creature eating dead leaves on the forest floor (implying consciousness)?

The article quotes PhD candidate at Michigan State University **Jonah Branding** as follows: *“There has been a lot of work on the question of animal consciousness in recent years and claims about consciousness are starting to be taken seriously for more and more organisms. In the 1990s, there was serious debate over whether chimpanzees are conscious. Today, there is serious debate over whether plants are conscious.”*

<https://neurosciencenews.com/consciousness-framework-neuroscience-29801/>

The awakening of man’s awareness down the centuries:

13th Century

Italian theologian and scholar, *Thomas Aquinas* denied that animals qualified for our moral concern for two reasons:
(1) God made animals exclusively for human use;
(2) Animals cannot reason.

17th Century

French philosopher, scientist and mathematician, *Rene Descartes* wrote that animals’ lack of language “shows not merely that the beasts have less reason than men, but that they have no reason at all”. He introduced the idea of animals as ‘automata’ or machines.

19th Century

One of the first rays of light came in the 19th Century when naturalist, geologist and biologist *Charles Darwin* wrote that sympathy for ‘all sentient beings’ is perhaps the highest virtue yet attained by ‘man’.
See *Descent*, pp. 75-77, 101 [HERE](#)

2005 – 2006

Scientists call on the *United Nations* to acknowledge animals as sentient beings with intrinsic value.

2025

Justice for Animals remains elusive but there is progress.



**Professor Ann Skelton,
one of South Africa's leading legal voices on child rights, speaks out on a new
global understanding of our relationship with one another and with animals**

The United Nations has decreed that children must be protected from exposure to violence, including violence against animals. A leading proponent of this seismic development in world ethics, is South Africa's own Professor at Law Ann Skelton.

Until March 2024, Professor Skelton was the chairperson of the United Nations **Committee on the Rights of the Child**.

The Committee has played a pivotal role in raising awareness on why and how exposure to violence can impact a child's emotional and psychological health, for life. Professor Skelton kindly agreed to give us further insight.



Professor Ann Skelton has recently ended her term as the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, an international body of which she was a member for 8 years.

She is a Law Professor and holds the UNESCO Chair in Education Law at the University of Pretoria, and the Chair in Children's Rights in a Sustainable World at the University of Leiden.

She worked as a children's rights lawyer in South Africa for 30 years where she played a leading role in child law reform. Professor Skelton pioneered strategic litigation on children's rights from the Centre for Child Law (where she was Director from 2008 to 2018) and appeared as counsel in many landmark cases in the South African courts, including cases enforcing the right to education.

[LISTEN TO THE ONLINE INTERVIEW HERE](#)



READ THE INTERVIEW BELOW

Nature-based Education:

*Professor Skelton, on 18th September 2023, a major shift took place in the realm of world ethics when the UNCRC issued its General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment. For the first time in history, as part of their right to environmental health, the UNCRC decreed that **children are to be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence whether in their home or in society, and from exposure to violence, such as domestic violence or violence inflicted on animals** (see [HERE](#)).*

This is an acknowledgement at the highest international level that how we treat animals matters – for ourselves, as much as for them. Could you give us insight into the build-up of information that culminated in this majorly progressive global step?

Professor Skelton:

Let me first explain that the main task of the CRC Committee is to monitor how states are doing on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee has previously asked States, for example, Spain, about the effects on children of witnessing bullfighting. This General Comment that you are referring to was issued by the Committee, and is an authoritative document that indicates the Committee's interpretation of the rights in the Convention.

We were considering the environment, and we wanted to stress the importance of educating children about the natural environment, and stressing their close connection to that environment, including to animals.

Nature-based Education:

The South American country of Colombia was one of the first UN member states to respond. In July 2024, Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced a ban on bull-fighting, calling it a victory for both children and animals. Do you think the world is undergoing a cultural transformation in regard to animals?

Professor Skelton:

Well as I specialize in children's rights I am not sure about transformations with regard to animals. But I do think that there is a growing understanding of the importance of animals to children, and that children's empathy and development are linked to their relationships with others, and with animals.

Nature-based Education:

In February 2024 at the UN's 95th Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Committee Vice-Chair Dr Rinchen Chopel urged the South African delegation to criminalise the practice of allowing children to participate in trophy hunting. The industry behind this hugely lucrative sport seems to be keeping mum on the issue. Could you comment please?

Professor Skelton:

As I am a South African, I actually did not participate in the South African dialogue, but I sat in the room and listened to it. So yes, I hear my colleague asking this question. Dr Chopel is from Bhutan which is a Buddhist country that prides itself on promoting happiness – and he frequently speaks up about the connections between children's rights and animal welfare.

Dr Rinchen Chopel,
Vice Chair and Rapporteur of the
UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
speaking at the United Nations...



Nature-based Education:

It seems we have a very long way to go. For example, the Gadhimai Festival in India exposes children to a two-day sacrifice of millions of animals. We have thousands of homeless dogs being shot in the streets of Morocco. How much time do you think this transition in world ethics will take?

Professor Skelton:

What I can tell you is that all the States that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child must come to report to the Committee every 5 years – and we provide them with recommendations that include the kinds of recommendations you have been pointing to – to stop exposure of children to hunting, or to bullfighting, or to culling done in a brutal way.

“**Engaging in nature-based education is not just a nice to have — it is a right!**”

Nature-based Education:

We have reached out to UNICEF (Africa) on several occasions for comment and a show of support for GC26 Article 35, but have received no response at all. Other countries have had a similar experience in their efforts to engage UNICEF. We wonder why the most powerful agency for the protection of children seems lackluster in regard to this particular mandate of the CRC.

Professor Skelton:

UNICEF is a very important player in Children's Rights – they probably have their hands full with all of the crises affecting children in the world today. I did read an interesting article about work being done in Ukraine by UNICEF, together with children, to provide safety for animals displaced by the war. Going beyond UNICEF: There is also a recognition in the children's rights world of the therapeutic effect of animals for children who are ill or who are traumatized.

Nature-based Education:

We recently celebrated the UN's International Day of Education on 24th January 2025. Please could you give us a message for the teachers who visit and make use of our nature-based education platform which is underpinned by the Five Freedoms for Animals, as endorsed by the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Professor Skelton:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a binding instrument that creates obligations for states, says that children must be educated to have respect for the natural environment. So engaging in nature-based education is not just a nice to have – it is a right!

The Committee's General Comment on the Environment, that we spoke about earlier, is also available in a child friendly version, so teachers can use it in their work. See [HERE](#)

Nature-based Education:

We thank you.

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RESOURCES



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find themselves in a
kinder world.**





In a ‘first’ for the African continent, students at the University of the Western Cape now have the opportunity to study animal rights at LLM (Master’s) level, in a milestone achievement towards justice for animals. Soon, there will also be a dedicated (peer-reviewed) Animal Law and Welfare book – a first for the African continent.

Developer and lecturer of the course, attorney Amy P Wilson, made history in 2018 when she became the first South African to graduate with a Master’s degree in Animal Law from the prestigious Lewis and Clark Law School in the USA.

Today, as the executive director of the NGO [Animal Law Reform South Africa](#), her influence for reinforced legal protection for animals is making waves – most recently for [penguins](#).

Here Amy talks to Animal Voice about gaining some sort of justice for Africa’s animal kingdom.

Animal Voice:

Would you agree that in terms of the law, we need to remove the legal status of animals as our ‘property’ (which makes them vulnerable to wide-scale abuse, exploitation and harm) and give them legal recognition as beings with intrinsic value in their own right, deserving of a respectful and dignified association with us, as humans?



Another important recognition is that human rights and animal rights are fundamentally and inextricably interconnected and [intertwined](#) and there are many opportunities to build on these synergies to ensure flourishing for all.

Amy P Wilson:

I think the issue of ‘animal rights’, is one that many people are confused about. Our legal system is structured in such a way that one is either a legal subject (or rights holder), or a legal object (or a thing or property). As long as animals and Nature fall into the category of the latter, they will always receive less legal recognition and protection and be exploited.

In my view, in order to align with what many of us already know and understand – namely that animals are sentient beings with intrinsic value – they need to receive legal recognition as rights holders.

Of course, this comes with many nuances, and considerations, but until such fundamental status changes, it will be very difficult to give animals the protections they need and deserve.

Animal Voice:

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has recognized the harmful and lifelong impact on young lives of witnessing violence. In 2023, the CRC decreed that no child may be exposed to violence, including violence against an animal (GC26: [See Section G paragraph 35](#)). Please give us your thoughts on this historic development.

Amy P Wilson:

Violence – whether it is against animals or humans, is an atrocity that must be eliminated from our society. South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world, yet our own Constitution recognises a specific right to be free from violence. This international development is critical because it reaffirms that we need to take every possible measure to move towards non-violence and that the protection of human (children) and animal interests (both vulnerable groups) are interlinked.

Animal Voice:

In support of GC26:35, The Humane Education Trust has developed a module for South Africa's senior phase learners that is somewhat different from our modules for younger learners. It focuses rather on the psychological and lifelong harm done to ourselves, as humans, when we experience or participate in abuse and violence, including violence against animals. The module is designed so that learners understand why GC26:35 squarely places animal welfare into the domain of child rights.

Amy P Wilson:

It is important work to link the protection of animals and children, including situating it within children's rights, as well as to bring these issues into education early on. More work needs to be done in South Africa to understand the links between violence against animals and other vulnerable groups, as well as using existing human rights to advocate for animal protection. There is some important research investigating this relating to slaughterhouse workers in the country, as well as in the home through situations of domestic violence. When we understand these links more clearly, we can advocate in a more holistic way so that the rights of all are ensured.

Animal Voice:

In terms of GC26:35, one of the concluding observations of the UNCRC was a call for a ban on persons under the age of 18 participating in trophy hunting. Is this something Animal Law Reform South Africa will take up?

Amy P Wilson:

ALRSA has done significant work relating to trophy hunting, including advocating for certain bans and stronger regulations, but we haven't yet focused on these issues in the context of children specifically. While we have also referenced the resolution in submissions made to government to highlight the links, I think there is a strong argument that could be made in favour of advocating for a ban on minors participating particularly because of our own Constitution's commitment to freedom from violence.

Animal Voice:

*The world has come a long way since the time of Henry Salt, the British social reformer who is credited with having written the first book in this field, titled *Animals' Rights*, back in 1892.*

Yet, when I consider that HET has fought vigorously against one of the epitomes of animal abuse – namely battery cages for laying hens – for all of 35 years, and yet more than 25 million laying hens are still incarcerated in South Africa in the most horrendous misery, one can't help but feel stymied, to say the least!

Amy P Wilson:

I am sure that it can feel that way after working on these issues for so long, and seeing what feels like such little progress. But what we are trying to do in some cases is completely overhaul the foundations of our society – which takes time.

In the span of only 10 years, we have seen the highest court in the country acknowledge that animals are sentient beings with intrinsic value, we have seen several courts recognise that human rights and animal protection are fundamentally linked, we have had animal law introduced into two different universities in the country, including at a master's level for the first time ever.

This doesn't even include all the exciting things that have happened internationally – in the animal rights or rights of Nature movement.

As Nelson Mandela said: "[t]here is no easy walk to freedom" and while it may be long and difficult, we must take it step by step.

In the meantime, we have been working with corporations to go cage free (specifically free-range), and have had seven commitments in the last few months alone.

While these are incremental steps, they all get us closer to the end goal – freedom, justice and flourishing for ALL!

Animal Voice:

South Africa is planning a significant move towards fish farming. This coincides with a study just released by the Welfare Footprint Institute that rainbow trout, for example, endure an average of 10 minutes of intense and excruciating pain during air asphyxia.

Because fishes do not have facial expressions or make sounds that we recognise as evidencing emotion of any kind, they need legal protection desperately. Please give us your thoughts on the way forward, in legal terms, for fishes.

Amy P Wilson:

I absolutely agree that fishes and aquatic beings receive less attention and protection than other animals, as I have [written before](#), and even [more recently](#) and also why I thought to create [World Aquatic Animal Day](#) (now a global movement) together with Dean Kathy Hessler).

I have recently been appointed as the chair-person of the Task Team on Aquaculture and Fisheries as part of the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment's Wildlife Wellbeing Forum. In that role, I intend to do my utmost best to ensure that the wellbeing and welfare of these animals is included and promoted in law and policy.

<https://www.earth.com/news/fish-like-rainbow-trout-suffer-extreme-pain-when-killed-by-air/>

I am also trying to raise awareness on the harms of fishing and aquaculture in the courses I teach and the books I am working on.

We need to actively work on breaking down our own biases and misconceptions about these animals and ensure they receive the protection they deserve.

Animal Voice:

Animal Voice thanks you for the insights you give us, the hope you generate, and for the immense endeavour you are putting into the creation of a better, kinder world.

“

Violence – whether it is against animals or humans, is an atrocity that must be eliminated from our society.

”



“

Animals have their own intrinsic value as individuals and like us, they need lawyers...

”

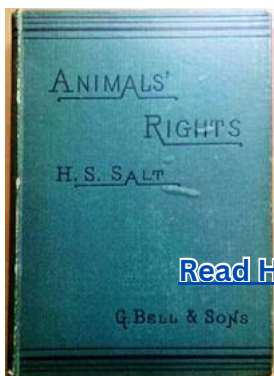


Noël Sweeney is a British lawyer who specialises in human rights and animal law. His powerful poetry gives voice to those who 'are hamstrung by being born without a human tongue'.

Here Noël gives us insight into why the words of *Henry Salt*, pioneer of animal rights a century ago, have travelled through time to guide, encourage and inspire him to this very day.

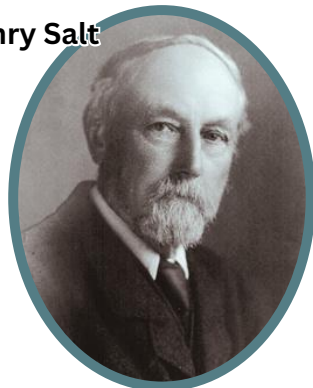
Animal Voice:

Noël, you pay a very moving tribute to Henry Salt in your article '[Rights run with Life](#)'. Salt was a pioneer of social reform at a time when women could not vote, and small children were put to work in coal mines. Yet Salt is believed to have been the first person to have explicitly suggested the inclusion of animal rights as an integral part of social reform in Britain.



[Read Here](#)

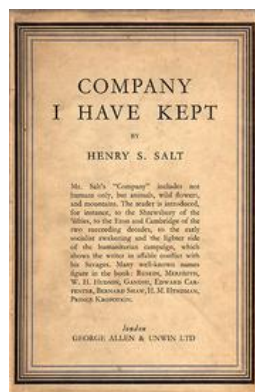
Henry Salt



Noël Sweeney:

Yes, and the wisdom of his words has travelled through time. Indeed, although I never knew him and he never knew me, I owe a debt to this man that can never be repaid. *Henry Salt* was far ahead of his time.

His creed extended to all inhabitants of the earth. In his book ***Company I Have Kept*** (published in 1930) he describes his "cousins" not as the "sons or daughters of an uncle or an aunt" but "as certain non-human friends of mine whom I like to think and speak of as 'cousins'".



[Read Here](#)

Animal Voice:

Salt was a teacher, a writer, a social reformer, and a pioneering spirit who lived frugally without seeking personal recognition.

Noël Sweeney:

Yes indeed, and he understood that the divide between humans and animals, on matters that matter, is wafer-thin.

In his work titled *Towards Democracy* in 1883, he wrote: "I saw deep in the eyes of the animals the human soul look out upon me."

In 1892, he published his classic work *Animals' Rights: Considered in Relation to Social Progress*.

His guiding principles were stated quite simply:

- We have to decide not whether the practice of fox-hunting, for example, is more, or less cruel than vivisection, but whether all practices which inflict unnecessary pain on sentient beings are not incompatible with the higher instincts of humanity.
- That man, to be truly man, must understand his common fellowship with all living nature, and that the coming realisation of human rights will inevitably bring after it the realisation of the rights of other species.

Animal Voice:

You mention that Henry Salt's work at the time coincided with the movement for women's rights?

Noël Sweeney:

Yes, for example, Edith Ward who fought for the right of women to vote, noted in an article in *Shafts Magazine* (1892), the connection between violence against women by men, and the abuse of animals by all humans.

Noël Sweeney:

In the article Edith Ward wrote: *'The case for the animal is the case for the woman. What is more likely to impress mankind with the necessity of justice for women, than the awakening of the idea that justice is the right of even an ox or a sheep?'*

Animal Voice:

Salt became a vegetarian at a time when the concept had hardly come into being.

Noël Sweeney:

And he was often ridiculed for it! But he remained steadfast. He had a sardonic humour and In his autobiography, he asked: *'What appeal can be made to people whose first instinct, on seeing a beautiful animal, full of joyousness and vitality, is to hunt or eat it?'* Salt pointed out that like racism and sexism, we humans discriminate against animals by assuming a superiority much like a controlling husband assumes his wife is his 'property'.

Albatross shows the ones who fall at our feet as well as those we choose to wear and eat.

Animals must be members of rather than numbers in our society where they are mere statistics of misery.



Animal Voice:

Salt would be happy that civilization has indeed made some progress for humans as well as animals in the last 50-odd years.

Noël Sweeney:

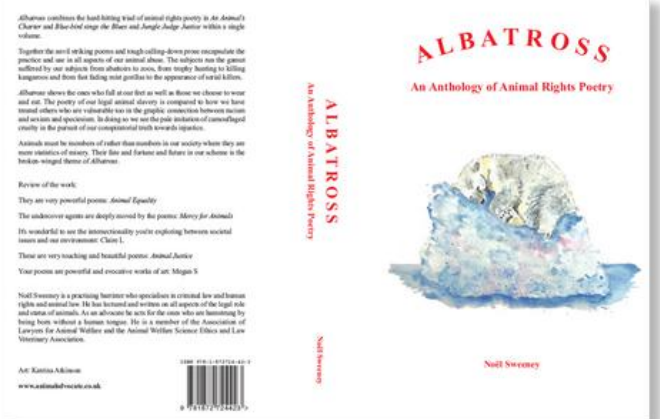
Yes he would, although it's not enough by far, by far. The crucial contemporary change for animals, came in 1975 when Peter Singer, the Australian moral philosopher, published *Animal Liberation* which has become the 'Bible' of the animal rights movement.

In the preface of the 1980 re-published edition, Singer paid tribute to Salt as the incredible pioneering spirit he was.

Animal Voice:

And in your powerful poetry, you are doing the same. We thank you.

[See Here](#)



A landmark legal bid to free three elephants from captivity in the Johannesburg Zoo has gained international traction, with heavyweight legal scholars from *Harvard Law School* stepping forward in support of the case.

The application – brought by *Animal Law Reform South Africa*, the *EMS Foundation* and *Chief Stephen Fritz* – is currently before the High Court in Pretoria.
Courtesy: Daily Maverick



Noël Sweeney draws attention to South Africa's own revered social pioneer who was influenced by the philosophy of *Henry Salt*... none other than the late **Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu**

Courtesy: Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics

Anti-Apartheid icon and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, **Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu** calls for the world **to fight injustice to animals** in the same way as it fights injustice to blacks, women and gays.

In a Press Release by the *Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics* on 28 December 2013, **Archbishop Tutu** says:

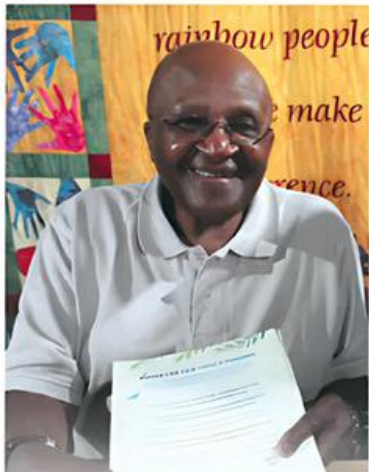
"I have spent my life fighting discrimination and injustice, whether the victims are blacks, women, or gays and lesbians. No human being should be the target of prejudice or the object of vilification or be denied his or her basic rights.

"But there are other issues of justice – not only for human beings but also for the world's other sentient creatures. The matter of the abuse and cruelty we inflict on other animals has to fight for our attention in what sometimes seems an already overfull moral agenda. It is vital, however, that these instances of injustice not be overlooked.

"I have seen first-hand how injustice gets overlooked when the victims are powerless or vulnerable, when they have no one to speak up for them and no means of representing themselves to a higher authority. Animals are in precisely that position. Unless we are mindful of their interests and speak out loudly on their behalf, abuse and cruelty goes unchallenged."

Archbishop Tutu's statement forms the foreword of *The Global Guide to Animal Protection*, a 323-page resource recently published by the University of Illinois Press.

<http://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/catalog/69wgp5qn9780252036354.html>



Tutu continues: "It is a kind of theological folly to suppose that God has made the entire world just for human beings, or to suppose that God is interested in only one of the millions of species that inhabit God's good earth.

"Our dominion over animals is not supposed to be despotism. We are made in the image of God, yes, but God – in whose image we are made – is holy, loving, and just. We do not honour God by abusing other sentient creatures.

"If it is true that we are the most exalted species in creation, it is equally true that we can be the most debased and sinful. This realization should give us pause ... There is something Christ-like about caring for suffering creatures, whether they are humans or animals."

Archbishop Tutu concludes by urging the world to seek justice and protection for all creatures, humans and animals alike.

"Churches should lead the way by making clear that all cruelty – to other animals as well as human beings – is an affront to civilized living and a sin before God."

[See Here](#)

The Humane Education Trust's March 2014 issue of *Animal Voice*, page 4, features Tutu's historical quote:

“ I have seen first-hand how injustice gets overlooked when the victims are powerless or vulnerable... Animals are in precisely that position. Unless we are mindful of their interests and speak out loudly on their behalf, abuse and cruelty goes unchallenged. ”

As many of you know, we create and provide educational material to the Departments of Education as well as directly to schools themselves.

Here, some of the learners in our humane education programmes give voice to feelings about animal abuse that are often left unspoken. A key factor in emotional regulation is to voice feelings.

KHWEZI, Grade 7

"I want to tell you the story of a stray dog who damaged my grandfather's neighbour's garden by digging holes in the place where we talk to our ancestors.

One day the neighbour told my grandfather that when he saw the dog again, he would cut off his tail.

Then came the day that we had a family traditional ritual for which we slaughtered a goat. After the ritual, the dog followed us to the place where we talk to our ancestors and started digging holes again. Someone called the neighbour who came and cut off the tail of the dog.

To see the dog's fear and pain made me feel sad and in a way I felt responsible for not having prevented the neighbour from cutting off the dog's tail. My grandfather also felt sorry for the dog and took him as his own and trained him.

He is now a happy, healthy dog.
His name is Dova."

SAMEER, Grade 7

"One day in March this year, my friend Ishma-eel and I were riding our bikes in the Crawford neighbourhood when we heard barking and people shouting.

We went to where the noises came from and there, on the open field, a dog fight was taking place. Two black Pit bulls were locked in a vicious attack on each other. The people standing around the fight were placing bets on which dog would win. My friend and I were startled.

Ishma-eel wanted to phone the police but he didn't have his phone with him. Luckily, a man who lived in a house next to the field, phoned the police.

When they got there, the people scattered but one of the dogs just lay there. The man who phoned the police took the dog into his home. I had nightmares about that day.

Then one day I drove past the house and saw that the dog was as good as new. I felt happy and relieved to see this."



Julia Evans

is general manager of the
Animal Welfare Society, Helderberg.

She sees the consequences
of animal abuse every day.



NUHA, Grade 7

"My Aunt and Uncle live in an apartment and share a back yard with the next door couple. The next door couple owned a dog whose name was Bruno. The dog had been in the back yard a long time before my aunt began to realise that this dog didn't even have a bowl of water from which to drink and didn't seem to have food either.

Day my day my aunt watched as the dog became thinner and thinner. Eventually she became so worried about the dog, she decided to feed and care for him herself. She fed Bruno and also made sure he had water. She was actually doing Bruno's owner's job. The owners did nothing for the dog. They just kept him there on a wire lead and that's where he stayed, day in and day out. Even his kennel was broken and looked a mess.

The owners had no care in the world for this poor dog.

A few years later, Bruno, really thin by now, developed a growth on his ear. At first it was just a little ball that dangled from his ear but within a few weeks, it had become as big as a tennis ball. My aunt got worried and called the SPCA to report to them that the owners didn't care for this dog and that he looked really sick. She told them that the owners didn't bother to feed him and that she fed him and gave him water. She also mentioned that Bruno didn't have a proper space in which to live. The SPCA came to the house, checked the situation, and took the dog away.

After a month or two, the next-door couple got another dog and the same thing happened all over again. They treated this dog exactly the same way as the previous one. Now my aunt needs to care for this dog too.

The situation is totally unacceptable.

I think that owning a pet is a privilege and that people should be screened before being allowed to own a pet, to make sure they will make a suitable home for their pet."

ANELISIWE, Grade 7

"Recently, my Mom and I moved to a new house in Epping, Cape Town. When I first arrived at the new house I loved it. But then it was spoilt for me by the fact that the landlord, Mr Parker, had six cats which he treated terribly. He did not feed the cats or even have a place for them to sleep. It made me miserable to see the cats so thin and bony. There were kittens too and one of the kittens had a toilet paper roll stuck around his neck.

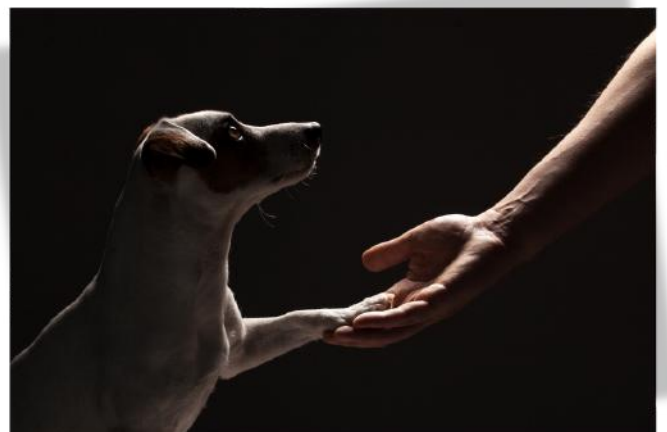
I told my Mom about it and she helped me to catch the kitten and take it off.

A few days later, my Mom went to buy cat food, a bowl and a little house in which the strays could shelter.

Nowadays we feed the cats three times a day. They are happy and we have given them names. The girl is Skyler and the two boys are Domino and Thomas. The parents are called Cuddles and Cody.

After learning humane education, I told my Mom that we need to sterilise the cats because there are already too many homeless strays who do not know the joy of being cared for."

What makes this issue of *Animal Voice* so important is that it is an acknowledgement at the highest international level that how we treat animals matters – for ourselves, as much as for them.



Belhar learners give us their thoughts on humane education

“For me, humane education was a great and joyful programme. It made me into a better person.” – Elton, Grade 10

*“Humane Education gave me a new pair of eyes. Everything I look at now, I see differently. Nowadays I don’t throw stones at stray dogs anymore and I give that thief-cat that always hangs at our door, our left-over food. I don’t even swear so much anymore and I really feel proud about it.”
– Brendan, Grade 10*

“Humane education has definitely made changes to my life. I remember just a few days ago, my neighbor was going to slaughter a chicken for his grandmother. He treated it like it had no feelings. I know that animals are food for us but they shouldn’t be treated like food while they are still alive.” – Sinazo, Grade 8

“The other day I saw a cat being abused. Since the humane education classes, I know now what to do. I immediately went to the owner and spoke to him. He ended up apologizing to me. I told him he should not ask for my forgiveness but for the cat’s forgiveness.” – Allistair, Grade 10

“Humane education has made a great impact in my life. If you think about the time of apartheid here in South Africa and compare it to the life of dogs now, the difference is not great.” – Aphiwe, Grade 8

“Humans, let’s stop abusing animals. We live on the same earth. Animals need to be treated in a good manner, as people are treated.” – Nolusindiso, Grade 10

“It’s a shame to see someone throwing a stone at a dog. Some people pour boiling water on animals. I think what people need is a little understanding. Today animals find themselves where they have no inheritance.” – Aphiwe, Grade 8

“In what other subject do you learn to love, care and protect?” – Hewston, Grade 10

*“I used to beat my brother’s dog whenever it came into the house. I never played with it without hurting it. But now, when I think of those times, it hurts me back.”
– Senazo, Grade 8*

“I believe a person who is cruel to animals is the same as a racist because it means that he doesn’t feel anything for someone or something not created the same as himself.” – Vusame, Grade 10



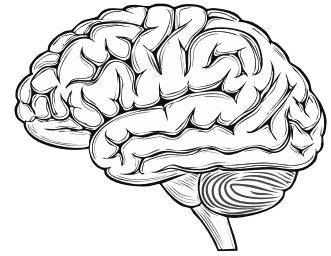
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[RESOURCES](#)



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Trauma in childhood leaves lasting biological scars on a child's brain

Neuroscience News.com reveals evidence in support of the UN's GC26:35 decree. According to the article [\[Child Abuse Leaves Lasting Biological Scars on the Brain and DNA\]](#) children exposed to trauma will have lasting measurable biological 'scars' on their DNA, 'altering brain structure and function'. Emanating from the Universities of Fukui and Hiroshima in Japan, the research states that childhood trauma "is one of the most serious public health concerns worldwide, leaving a lasting impact on the emotional well-being, memory, and social development of affected individuals".

According to the article, the problem reaches far beyond its psychological impact, affecting the brain and biological processes through genetic changes." [\[Molecular Psychiatry\]](#) It states that detection, intervention and prevention of trauma in childhood, could play a significant role in the onset of mental health issues later in life.

Leading Educators suggest that as humans become involved in projects for the restoration of nature, they also heal themselves, and many of the mental health issues that plague society today.



Dr Julie Reddy

CEO of SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and Deputy Chair of the South African National Commission for UNESCO

*"If we teach our children at a very young age about care and respect for **other...** it doesn't matter who they are or what they are... respect for the diversity that we find ourselves in, we will be a much, much better country and we will learn compassion."*



Professor Glen Albrecht

Geoscientist, eco-philosopher and author of Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World

"To repair and restore this Earth is now the highest good that I can think of."

He invites everyone to step out of the current Anthropocene era (where human self-interest dominates and destroys) and become part of the Symbiocene era in which all human activity supports all life.



Professor Karin Murris

Associate Professor at the School of Education, University of Cape Town, and author of The Posthuman Child.

She suggests the focus of education be turned away from Westernised Humanism, towards Posthumanism with its understanding of the connectivity and interdependency between all earth dwellers.

Please help build a kinder world...

Please help reach as wide an audience as possible by forwarding this magazine



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