

**PRIDE NOT POVERTY TOUR**  
**“Meet the People”**

**VERSUS**

**THE STANDARD TOWNSHIP TOUR**

As a tour operator we were told by SAPS (SA Police) that we should not really go into the townships as it was perceived that, as non-residents of townships, we were taking away the business opportunities from the locals. Our safety could not be guaranteed and needing an adapted vehicle for starters the “locals” could not do the tour. So with all this information we opted not to do the local Cape Town township tour.

I looked around for something else, for loss of a better word, a little more dignified, where the people could show their pride rather than play on your feelings of guilt and see their poverty. I then met a young man with vision and a dream – Jauckie Viljoen. The fact that he lives in Mossel Bay, the town where I grew up and which will always be close to my heart due to a wonderful childhood there, was even better. The tour is conducted in the area of Mossel Bay, Little Brak River and Great Brak River on the Garden Route. Some of these areas have such high rates of unemployment that promoting the community and highlighting their plight is a plus.

So we did a “Meet the People” tour and got to know some fascinating characters on this reconnaissance. I also had to see how wheelchair friendly it was and how we could accommodate guests with other disabilities and how our mature and discerning guests would like it – it went down a storm with everyone I have taken there.



One person on this “Meeting” stands out as the person who has grown the most from meeting and interacting with people from different walks of life around the world.

His name is Janneman. He is a carpenter by trade, but after an accident which left him paraplegic, he could not work as before and his confidence was totally shattered and he felt that he was “lost” to the world, where an income makes the difference between poverty and putting a meal on the table of his family.

When I first met this gentle man – note that I split the word – he was shy, felt worthless and useless and would not even look you in the eye. With a lot of encouragement from Jauckie and some help from the local Rotarians, I am very pleased to say, Janneman is a changed man, he has found Pride over potential Poverty. He now makes hand stitched leather bags. His smile is broad and welcoming, his small workshop fully accessible for wheelchairs and all other disabilities, all other types of visitor's in fact, and they have such a warm feeling of friendship and almost awe after listening to Jauckie explain the whole story before arriving to meet this gentleman whose life has been turned around.

This is just one of the many people we meet, when “Meeting the People” on this DIFFERENT type of tour, which includes lunch in the township, meeting a lady who runs an “alcohol free” shebeen and kiddies playground. Also a lady that uses herbs grown in her garden, to make a refreshing tea. A gentleman who roasts coffee beans and the smells emanating from his roastery is wonderful as those with sensory disabilities such as sight impairment can smell and feel the tree he has potted in the entrance, as well as feel the beans, also hear the popping of the beans as they are roasted. Many other interesting people on this tour, not all in townships, a mix of all our wonderful cultures and peoples who make up the face of South Africa – we welcome you to send you guests and have them experience this wonderful “Pride over Poverty” tour which leaves you feeling that you have done something special, rather than feeling guilty and embarrassed.