

"Bikers fight to free orcas" - by Ndu Ngwenya (tame TIMES)

On Saturday 14 June a group of about 40 animal rights activists met at the Grand Slam Sports Diner in Edenvale. The group, which is part of an international activist group called Bikers 4 Orcas, joined their fellow members from other countries for an annual awareness ride. Bikers 4 Orcas was founded in The Netherlands in August 2013 by Vincent Lensen. Lensen developed a love for orcas when at an early age he saw the majestic creatures at the Dolphinarium in Harderwijk. Later on he realized, he said, that these animals should not be put in concrete tanks for the entertainment of humans.

Speaking to tame TIMES, South African Bikers 4 Orcas podleader Lia Lopes explained that - just like bikers - orcas treasure their freedom and that their lifespans are reduced in captivity. Bikers 4 Orcas believes that these amazing animals - otherwise known as killer whales - should be allowed to thrive in the wild in their family groups.

Asked about the group's mission, Lopes said that they wanted to put an end to marine captivity and to educate both children and adults about the realities facing marine creatures in captivity with the assistance of as many people as possible.

"Our fingerprint on the earth should be a light one, but unfortunately - due to differences in cultures and sometimes ignorance, practices which are harmful to the environment and to the wellbeing of the earth's species' - this is not reality. This is why we want to teach as many people as possible, so we can transform human behaviour, especially behaviour towards helpless animals," said Lopes.

Through partnerships with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and other animal rights organisations, it is important that we make sure that the protection of endangered species' is prioritised above our cultural differences, Lopes added, referring to the often cruel Japanese methods of hunting orcas and their subsequent imprisonment in isolation.

Due to organisational glitches with traffic police, the South African ride did not transpire; however, the group still met and enjoyed the screening of Blackfish - a movie exposing what happens behind the scenes at marine parks.