



 **DAKTARI**  
BUSH SCHOOL & WILDLIFE ORPHANAGE



## DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage

### Program Overview

DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage provides supplementary environmental and life skills education to Grade 8 learners in the nearby underprivileged communities. Every Monday morning DAKTARI welcomes eight children to the camp to spend five days attending lessons and doing activities aimed at building their knowledge of the environment.

Each lesson is taught by international volunteers who pay DAKTARI to be a part of the program as teachers and animal care providers. The volunteers receive the teaching program, a comprehensive manual with instructions for teaching each lesson. They are also taught how to properly care for animals by our staff. This structure allows volunteers, who do not have teaching or animal care experience, to take part in the program.

To further inspire the children, they interact with the animals at DAKTARI's wildlife orphanage. The animals live in enclosures throughout the camp or live free in the bush surrounding camp. Twice per day, the children assist our volunteers and staff with animal feeding and care. Whether it is a hungry squirrel or a curious marmoset monkey, each child is able to see an animal up close, in a safe and fun environment.

After their time here, students from two of our partnering schools, Maahlamele and Rakgolokwana, have the opportunity to attend an Eco Club at their school taught by DAKTARI's Outreach Manager and volunteers. The Eco Club is voluntary for any student still interested in learning about the environment and the local wildlife. Lessons are designed to reinforce the concepts taught at DAKTARI and foster the students interest in protecting their natural heritage. Students and volunteers undertake community projects, such as rubbish clean-up days or tree plantings, to show how the lessons can be applied at home.

The mission of DAKTARI is to educate and inspire local children to value their environment and stimulate community development.



## THE TEACHING PROGRAM

The day begins at 7am for the children and volunteers. Each day has a mix of lessons, activities, and animal interactions. In a stark contrast to their normal classes in secondary school, class sizes are kept small and individual attention is given to each child. Several lessons, such as animal knowledge, are designed to be taught one-on-one between the volunteer and child.

Though not environmentally-focused, DAKTARI's social talks and politeness lesson are included in the program to address some serious issues that the children face at home. DAKTARI's friendly environment gives the children the confidence to speak openly about their concerns and needs.

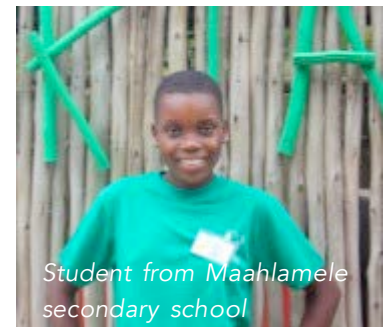


Volunteer teaching a lesson on the environment

Another aspect of the teaching program is to introduce children to the variety of job opportunities available to them near their home. A portion of the week is spent with the children explaining the types of jobs in a game lodge. On Wednesday, the children go to the neighbouring game lodge to ask questions and learn more.

Near the end of the week, we ask the children to bring everything together in a lesson called "Making South Africa a Better Place". The volunteers and students work together to explain how the environment, wildlife, and a clean community all contribute to the economy and culture of South Africa. The lesson ends with the children writing down six personal promises for themselves to follow in order to improve their lives and protect the environment.

- 1) I promise I will respect others
- 2) I promise I will never pollute water
- 3) I promise I will be clean when I go to school
- 4) I promise I will teach people how to respect others
- 5) I promise I will teach others how to take care of animals
- 6) I promise I will do my best at school



Student from Maahlamele secondary school

DAKTARI's teaching program aims to provide children with the passion, knowledge, and confidence to protect the animals and natural landscape around them.

## THE WILDLIFE ORPHANAGE

The wildlife orphanage started with a blind donkey and a bushbuck. Today, more than 80 animals call DAKTARI home, including that same blind donkey and bushbuck. DAKTARI takes in animals that have no possibility of being released into the wild. The staff is also trained in raising baby animals of several species, including tree squirrels, mongoose, warthogs, and porcupines. Volunteers and even the children help raise these small animals until they can be released back into the bush.



*Volunteers feeding a baby squirrel*

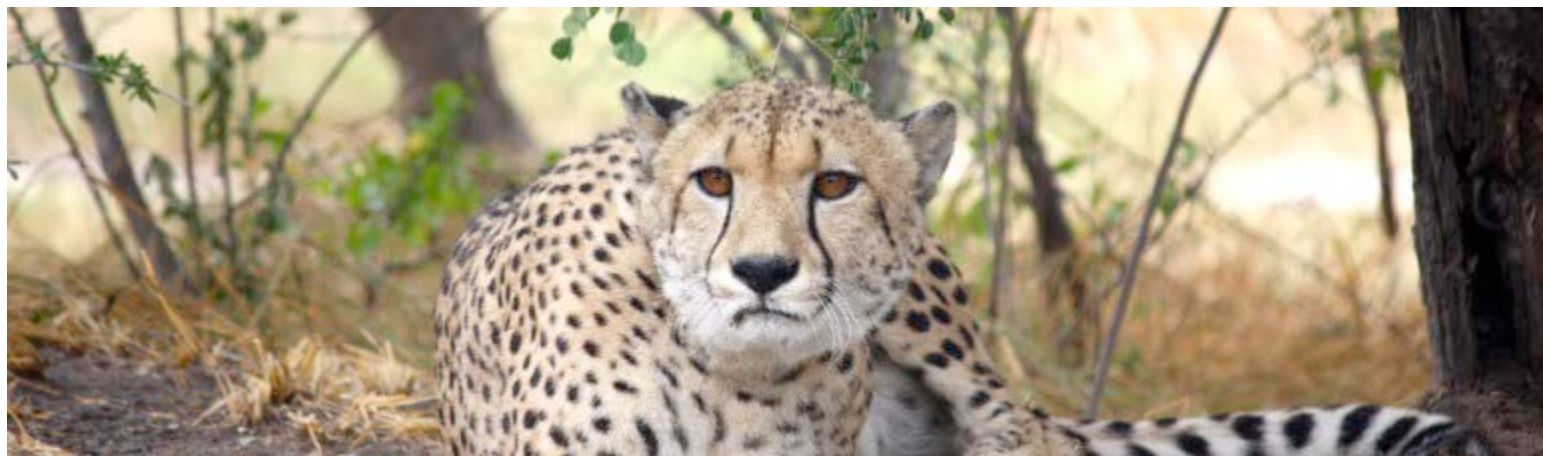
These animals provide a crucial function in the teaching of the children. Despite the fact that these children live within 60km of one of the largest game reserves in the world, Kruger National Park, many of them have never seen the local wildlife. The cost of entering these game reserves, both national and private, is too high for their families to afford. Limpopo province has the highest poaching rate of any province in South Africa. Our aim is to decrease that rate through education.



*Children with a baby tree squirrel*

The opportunity to finally see a cheetah, jackal, or even a tree squirrel in person is rare for our students. Their faces light up when they arrive and see a cheetah have a meal or have a squirrel jump on their shoulder. This experience inspires the children to want to protect these animals.

Through our partnerships with rehabilitation centers in the area, including Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre and the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, animals are transferred to DAKTARI to become ambassadors in the teaching program. The animals are given a second chance at life to help save other members of their species.





## THE OUTREACH PROGRAM

The program is split into two parts: the Eco Clubs and career guidance for unemployed youth.

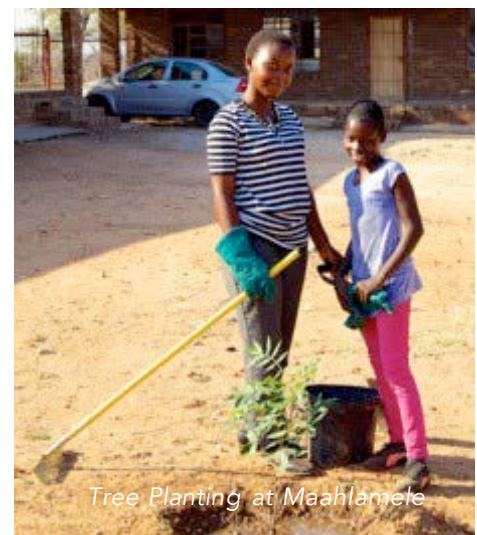
The Eco Clubs emerged organically. A group of learners at Maahlamele secondary school were meeting after school to discuss their time at DAKTARI and what they learned. They had been inspired to learn more about the environment, their local wildlife, and what they could do to protect their home.



After hearing about this group, DAKTARI volunteers began joining the meetings. These gatherings turned into more formal Eco Clubs hosted by a DAKTARI volunteer once per week. The Outreach Manager takes two to three volunteers into the village each week and they teach the children lessons about the environment and wildlife. Each lesson is an hour and a half and starts right after school. The children enjoy them so much, that Eco Club lessons happen even during school holidays.

In 2016, DAKTARI expanded the Eco Club to include a second school. The first Eco Club at Rakgolokwana was attended by 60 students. The aim is to host Eco Clubs at all of five schools in our area.

The Eco Club children are also actively involved in community projects. In 2016, DAKTARI and the Eco Club students planted 67 trees among five schools. They also participated in recycling and rubbish collection around their villages and then used the materials to build a community dustbin! These projects show students how to improve their community and put their lessons to practical use.



During weeks when the Grade 8 children are writing exams, local youth come to the camp from the nearby villages for career program. The teaching program is adjusted to focus on giving these youth the skills they need to find a job. There are lessons on CV writing, cover letter writing, job interview skills, and using email to reach out to potential employers. The youth are given certificates and recommendations if needed.

## Founding of DAKTARI

DAKTARI's founders, Ian and Michele Merrifield, met at a private game lodge where Ian worked as the Head Game Ranger and Michele as a volunteer caring for the animals. They married and opened a restaurant together several years later. Even while running their restaurant, they never stopped taking in orphaned or injured animals that were brought to them by people in the area.



Ian and Michèle Merrifield



Thabo and Lilly, a duiker

At that time, they also helped raise a young boy named Thabo from the local village. They soon learned that Thabo had almost no knowledge or understanding of his native wildlife and environment. Ian and Michele began using the animals that they were caring for to teach him about his natural heritage. They realised that Thabo's understanding of conservation was typical of children in Limpopo. That was the seed that planted the idea of a bush school. They named it DAKTARI after a TV show both Ian and Michele watched as children.

Limpopo province is the poorest in South Africa. Half of the population is without running water and 93% of students are part of the government-sponsored nutrition program at school<sup>3</sup>. After school, the unemployment rate for youth is more than 50%<sup>2</sup>. DAKTARI hopes to reach the poorest communities in South Africa and provide them with the knowledge and skills to improve their communities, environment, and job prospects after school.

11%

of total rhino poaching in South Africa happens in Limpopo<sup>1</sup>

38%

the rate of unemployment in Limpopo province<sup>2</sup>

4,5%

of jobs in South Africa come from the tourism industry<sup>4</sup>

21%

of residents in Limpopo have their waste collected by the state<sup>3</sup>

58%

of unemployed black people in South Africa did not finish school<sup>2</sup>

37%

of students achieve matriculation after Grade 12<sup>5</sup>

# Success Stories

## Mabine and the bushbaby

Mabine came to spend a week at DAKTARI where he saw for the first time in his life our funny little bushbaby who was taken care before release. All the children loved this little little creature and couldn't believe that they were living in their village but were usually killed because people were scared of their big eyes.

Two months later, Mabine and his brother called us at 7 pm to ask for help as they saw a bushbaby very sick and they wanted us to take care of him. First we thought these children only wanted a special intention from us and wouldn't believe they actually had the animals with them. In the doubt, we drove to the village and found these two little boys walking around with a torch and holding a cage. Yes, they had a very weak bushbaby in it and gave it to us for good care. They also asked us to promise to bring the cage back, just in case they would find another animal in need. The bushbaby was given lots of fluid and good food before being released two weeks later.



## Kids sending the pastor to give us the 3 genets

In the nearby village, there is a pastor who also welcomes underprivileged children in his home. One day, after a big storm, he and two children, found 3 baby genet in a paddle of water. The pastor did not know about us and asked the children what they should do with the babies as they were very weak, cold and the mother wasn't around. One of the children mentioned to the pastor that he had heard from his friends that there is a special place where they look after animals, called DAKTARI. The pastor instantly made contact with us and brought us the three babies. We have successfully raised them with the assistance of our dog, Candy, who even produced milk for the baby genets.





## Kagiso and Tebatso

Kagiso, 17, and Tebatso, 14, are two of DAKTARI's best Eco Club students, attending almost every lesson. In early 2016, the boys began working together to make animals out of clay in their spare time. They built a kiln in Kagiso's backyard and invested in paint. Through DAKTARI's Outreach Program, the boys had the opportunity to participate in the monthly Farmers Market in Hoedspruit from August until December. They even struck up a partnership with the largest craft market in Hoedspruit to sell their clay animals at the store. Their animals are sold at DAKTARI's camp as well.

Since they started, Kagiso and Tebatso have sold more than 110 clay animals. Kagiso has also started to sell his drawings in homemade frames. His dream is to be an artist after he finishes school.



## Maakosha Shai

Maakosha is an inspirational woman from the Oaks village. She has been hosting DAKTARI volunteers as part of the homestay program since 2014. After an extensive vetting process, volunteers began spending a night with Maakosha and her family. She brings them to the marketplace where she sells her delicious fish, they accompany her to the river to collect water and she teaches the volunteers how to cook pap, a staple of the South African diet.

A total of 28 volunteers have stayed with Maakosha in the past two years. Each stay is paid for by the volunteers and Maakosha uses the money she earns to help support herself and her 6-year-old son. Not only is she involved in the homestay program, but Maakosha is an outspoken member of her community who is always looking for ways to improve the Oaks.





## Proposal

DAKTARI is requesting funding of **\$ 10 000.00** toward the food for the animals we accommodate in our wildlife orphanage.

Annual Budget 2018/2019					
Description	Educational programme	Wildllife Orphanage	Outreach & Community Development	Running Cost	Total Expense/Income
<u>Expenses</u>					
Food	R364,285.71	R194,857.14	R72,857.14		R632,000.00
Marketing	R0.00	R0.00	R0.00	R100,000.00	R100,000.00
General expenses	R28,214.29	R5,142.86	R15,642.86	R125,000.00	R174,000.00
Consumable	R47,083.33	R0.00	R5,416.67		R52,500.00
Gas, generator and Solar	R158,333.33	R10,000.00	R31,666.67		R200,000.00
Transport	R231,190.48	R32,071.43	R46,238.10		R309,500.00
Stationery	R10,714.29	R2,142.86	R2,142.86		R15,000.00
Rent	R12,857.14	R2,571.43	R2,571.43		R18,000.00
Repair and Maintenance				R325,000.00	R325,000.00
Accounting				R28,000.00	R28,000.00
Bank Fee				R18,000.00	R18,000.00
Insurances				R75,000.00	R75,000.00
Salaries/cost employment				R1,040,000.00	R1,040,000.00
Cost of Sale				R63,000.00	R63,000.00
Saving account	R142,857.14	R28,571.43	R28,571.43		R200,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>R995,535.71</b>	<b>R275,357.14</b>	<b>R205,107.14</b>	<b>R1,774,000.00</b>	<b>R3,250,000.00</b>
<u>Income</u>					
Volunteers					1,400,000.00
Sales					100,000.00
Goal Fundraising					<b>1,750,000.00</b>
Annual Budget					<b>3,250,000.00</b>



**Thank You!**

