

# Impact Report



**Prepared By :**

Michaela Geytenbeek

**January - December 2025**





## IMPACT OVERVIEW

### Our Aims

- Provide children with quality environmental education that nurtures a curiosity and awe for nature and encourages the application of 21st Century Skills
- Empower and enthuse 15 Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers to incorporate nature in their daily teaching practices
- Provide transformative training to 15 ECD teachers that strengthens their self-efficacy, deepens their understanding of children's capabilities, and enriches their sense of connection with the earth
- Uplift our local natural spaces so that our community are encouraged to access them

### Our Reach

**390 children**



**21 teachers graduated**



**from our Community  
Embedded  
Environmental  
Education Programme**

**1 school**



**deep mentorship for  
sustained  
pedagogical practice**

### Key focus areas

**Quality  
education**



**Earth  
stewardship**



**Transformative  
learning**



## OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

We have coordinated four community projects this year. This report provides brief details on each project. If you would like more information about any of these initiatives, please feel free to request our full project reports.



### Community Embedded Environmental Education

*How can we care for something we do not know?*

Through a variety of initiatives, our flagship programme aimed to empower and enthuse 15 Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers to incorporate nature in their daily learning practices.



### Transformation of Ekuthuleni

In 2024 we transformed the learning environment at Ekuthuleni Childcare Centre through teacher training, environment preparation and close mentorship. This year we continued mentoring the teaching team with the vision of sufficiently empowering them to walk their teaching journey with confidence, and initiative.



### Maintenance and Upliftment of Virginia Bush

One of the nature reserves that we frequent is neglected, and so we formed a maintenance team. Our team work in the bush two days each week to ensure that the paths are maintained, fences fixed, and bridges functional. Our team also removes invasives and conducts litter clean-ups in the bush.

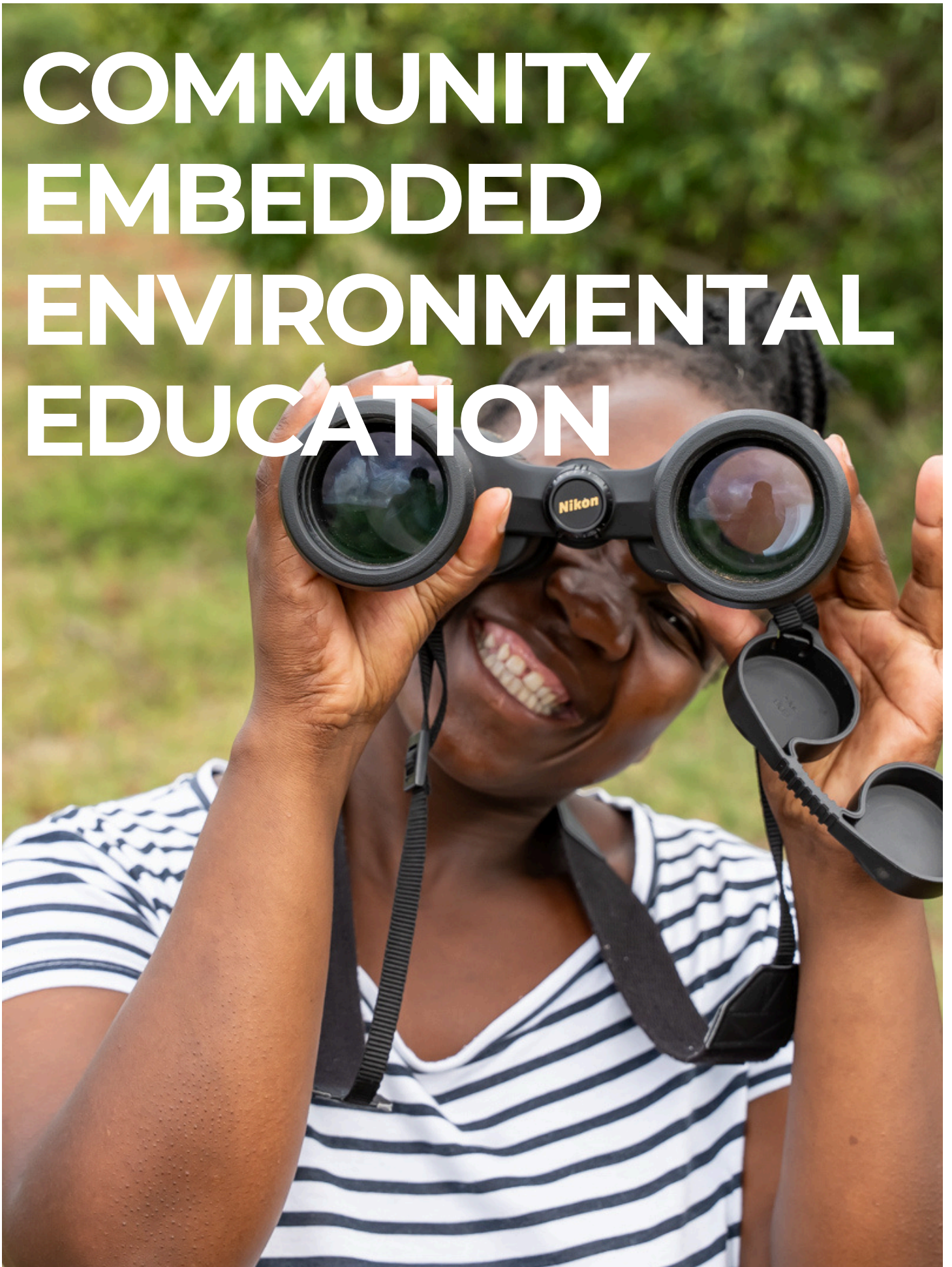


### Londeka's Education

We have spearheaded the sponsoring of Londeka's education at Virginia Prep. We have a community of dedicated donors who contribute a monthly pledge for her education, transport and extracurricular activities.



# COMMUNITY EMBEDDED ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



*If children do not know nature, they will not understand it.  
If they do not understand it, they will not protect it.*



*"Nature is the world around us. Appreciating nature and taking care of it the best way we can. Also preserving it for future generations. I have learnt how to use recyclable materials to create interesting learning tools. I learnt about different animals and plants. I learnt about the sea and different habitats. Moreso, I learnt that there is always a different approach to life than what meets the eye. I learnt that nature isn't just trees and plants, but it's learning to be one with them and appreciating them and preserving them! Thank you so much." - Ranah Sithole, Inkanyezi*

In one moment, everything that CEEE has achieved became evident. We were gathered in a circle under an African Sky. The sounds of nature surrounded us. Twenty-one women began sharing their heart. It happened organically; slowly at first and then all at once.

"We have become a family."

"We do not want Kinship to end."

"We have come to understand how capable we are."

"We have learnt how to teach our children with play."

"We now love nature."

Through song and tears they gave thanks.

Our Community Embedded Environmental Education (CEEE) programme began in February 2025 with an Introductory Session where we laid out the plan for the year, and formally enrolled 33 teachers from 15 early childhood development (ECD) centres. These ECD centres were all located in Inanda - 12 in Amatikwe, and 3 in eTafuleni. The teachers were invited to walk a year-long learning journey with us - consisting of practical lesson ideas, immersive experiences, mentorship, and training. The overall aim was to empower and enthuse the teachers to incorporate nature in their daily teaching practices. The Programme encouraged active teacher participation, with each level of engagement opening further opportunities for self-development.

## THE CEEE JOURNEY



We hosted our introductory function, where we got to meet the teachers and learn what their dreams for the year were.



We conducted observations at each school to gain a baseline understanding of their daily routine, teaching style and the teacher's understanding of their class's capabilities.



We led 6 Kinship sessions at 15 schools in Inanda. The lessons focused on the following themes: Water is life, Plants, Habitats, Waste and Recycling, Bugs, and Frogs.



We took each school on excursion to different nature reserves around Durban, including Umhlanga Nature Reserve, and the Durban Botanical Gardens. As one of the days was rainy, we visited the Natural History Museum.



33 teachers joined us for an immersive experience in Monks Cowl, Drakensberg. They participated in workshops exploring their connection to nature, went hiking and learnt about indigenous knowledge.



We hosted two trainings with the teachers exploring child development and lesson planning.



We partnered with Singakwenza, teaching the ladies how to make learning resources from waste.



We introduced our Nature Resource Curriculum, which uses nature as the main resource for teaching ECD-level education.



We hosted 30 Northwood boys in Inanda, and together planted trees, painted murals, built sandpits and junglegyms, and made extra learning resources for the schools.



We hosted 6 Earth Stewardship Lectures on Saturday mornings. Each lecture taught a specific theme of nature: water, land, plants, animals, the human-nature relationship and kinship. Each lecture began with a test on the previous week's content. In order to qualify for the bush immersion, the teachers had to obtain a minimum aggregate of 80% across the five tests.



We supplied each ECD center with a resource box that allows the teachers to lead all of the lessons in the earth stewardship curriculum.





We shifted into a space of mentorship - encouraging the teachers to lead the lessons during our weekly visits. We provided intentional feedback to them.



21 teachers qualified to join us in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve for our Bush Immersion. We went on game drives, completed a 3-hour Bush Walk and set aside time for reflection.



We celebrated the effort of the 21 teachers graduating from our CEEE Programme at our very first year end function - Ukubungaza. We used this as an opportunity to share our work with a wider community.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout the programme we have conducted a rigorous monitoring and evaluation process, to establish the impact that the programme is having on our participants. We assessed two primary elements:


- 1. Teacher Transformation (the impact of the programme on each teacher)
- 2. The Success of the Programme (has it created change?)

SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMME


To determine the success of the programme we considered the following indicators:

- 1. Participant engagement (assessed through observations, registers, reflection)
- 2. Relationships and Trust built (how much have they opened up to us?)
- 3. Quality of teacher’s lesson implementation (have they understood what we are teaching?)
- 4. Facilitator’s feeling of accomplishment (do we feel like we are having a change on the ground?)
- 5. How the children interact with nature (are our lessons impactful?)

**Participant engagement**



13 schools have a 98% attendance at our weekly lessons.



13 schools have an attendance of over 90% across lessons, trainings, excursions and immersions.

Teachers have attended impromptu trainings with a week’s notice. These have been initiated by them, showing their engagement.

**Relationships & Trust**

Teachers have shared personal information with our team, demonstrating a building trust. They have trusted us with the safety of their children and themselves during our excursions and immersions. We have shared a few emotion-filled moments together, especially during the immersions, cementing our growing relationship. The teachers welcome our team with open arms at their schools and are happy to receive direction, feedback and assistance.

**Lesson implementation**

Through intentional mentorship and feedback, 12 teachers implemented our Earth Stewardship Curriculum lessons with enthusiasm and confidence. Seven teachers extended our lessons by incorporating their own activities within our lessons, demonstrating a deep understanding of what is being taught and a sense of initiative. The only teacher that did not achieve this, had not attended any of our Earth Stewardship trainings.

**Children & Nature**

A parent approached one of our teachers - “Nelly, what is the inner core? My child is talking about the layers of the earth. Isn’t that grade 8 geography?”

The children are so much more comfortable outside. They are beginning to notice small intricacies: the beauty of a flower, a spider’s web. They are assimilating the knowledge shared during the lessons. We ask them to name a sea animal, and the mantra of answers is long and complicated: jellyfish, starfish, shark, stingray, octopus. Animals they didn’t know existed at the beginning of the year. They are excited and enthused.

### Facilitator Feedback

“Every day I wake up knowing that I am going to Inanda and doing something that is bringing change to the community.” - Thando

Until the Bush Immersion we were uncertain which of the teachers would continue practicing our Earth Stewardship Curriculum after the official programme ended. We are now positive that all of the 12 schools that we graduated will continue to do so.

### Participant feedback

At our end of year celebration, unbeknown to us, the teachers prepared and delivered a speech. The speech spoke to the impact that the programme had on their lives.

*“It all seemed impossible for me until Michalea, Thando, Thabile and Bandile came along. At first, I thought to myself that this probably wouldn't last or that I probably was not going to gain anything. But I was dead wrong.....The consistency that the Kinship Team showed us from the very first day until now has been outstanding - not even the government is that consistent. They showed us that love, patience and hard work can create a beautiful environment and outcome for the development of our kids. They also taught us that the classroom is not the only important element for our children - but the outdoors and nature too. Kids really enjoy and learn more out there. I could go on and go with praises for Mix and her Team but I will end by saying: The impact you've had on our lives this year has been life changing. You have given a group of complete strangers hope and something to look forward to. You have created change and a difference on our communities. From today the idea of teaching will not be the same boring methods - not because Kinship says so, but because we know so.”*

-Ranah Sithole, Inkanyezi



During our end of year interviews we posed a few questions to the teachers regarding the impact of the programme. Here are some of their responses:

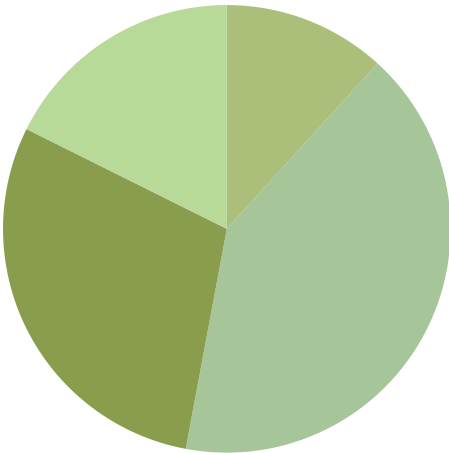
*“Kinship has been the light in our lives. They taught us things we never taught we will learn. They made us see the earth differently.” - Phindile, Impumelelo*

*“I now enjoy teaching about nature and learning about it. I enjoy being outside now. I want to protect it.” - Cmah, Ekuthuleni*

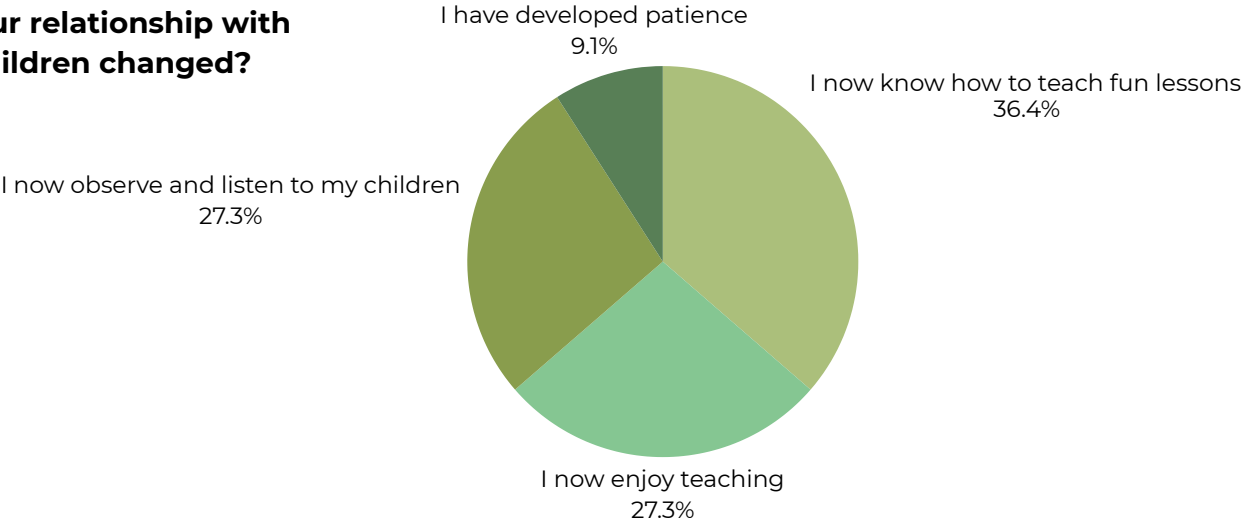
*“Kinship made me look forward to learning and it was so easy to understand the information.” - Londeka, Cathulani*

**Which element of the programme had the largest impact on you?**

- 11.8% ● the ES lessons
- 41.2% ● Drakensberg immersion
- 29.4% ● Bush immersion
- 17.6% ● Training



**Has your relationship with your children changed?**



## TEACHER'S TRANSFORMATION

Throughout the programme we assessed three Domains of Transformation:

1. Teacher efficacy (I believe I can)
2. The relationship between self (teacher) and the living world (earth)
3. Teacher's understanding of the child's capacity (child)



### Self-efficacy: I believe I can

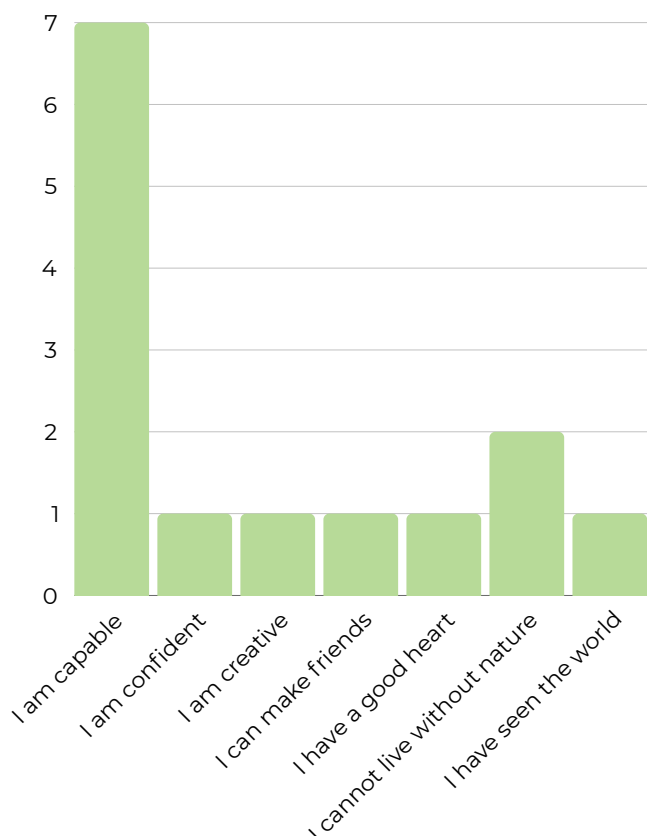
The women that stood before us in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi were not the same as the women we met at our introductory function. These women were now bold, confident and empowered.

In response to an open-ended question - "Have you discovered anything about yourself this year?" - 50% of the women noted that they have realised how capable they are. Their responses to this question can be seen alongside.

The teachers recorded that during the year they felt proud of themselves. Implementing their own lessons generated the greatest sense of pride. One teacher, Nelly, remarked "When I led the lessons I felt free."

*"I am capable of anything I put my mind to.  
I am a champion that can take on any  
challenge any day." - Ranah, Inkanyezi*

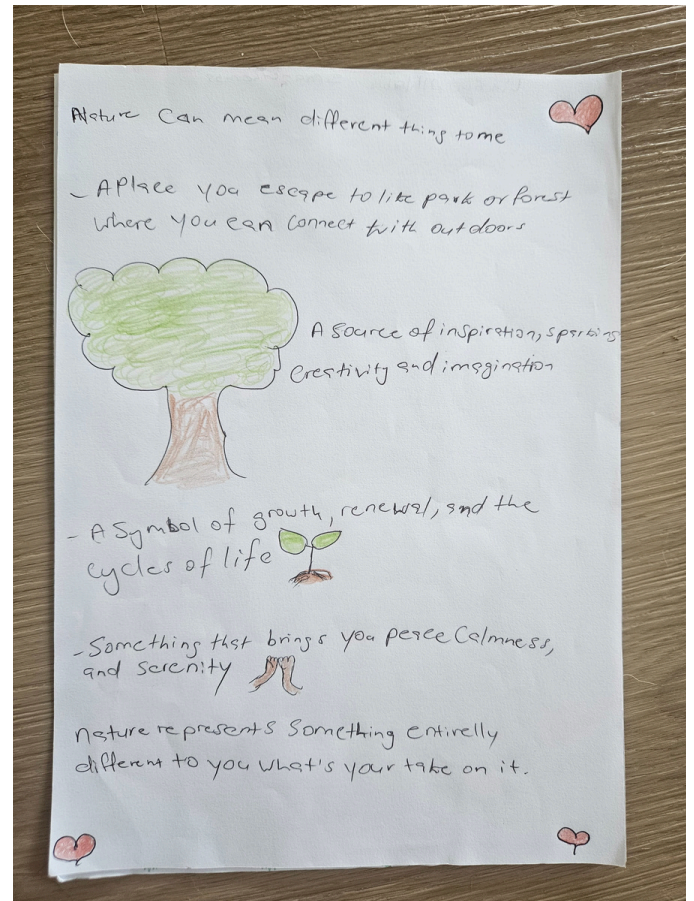
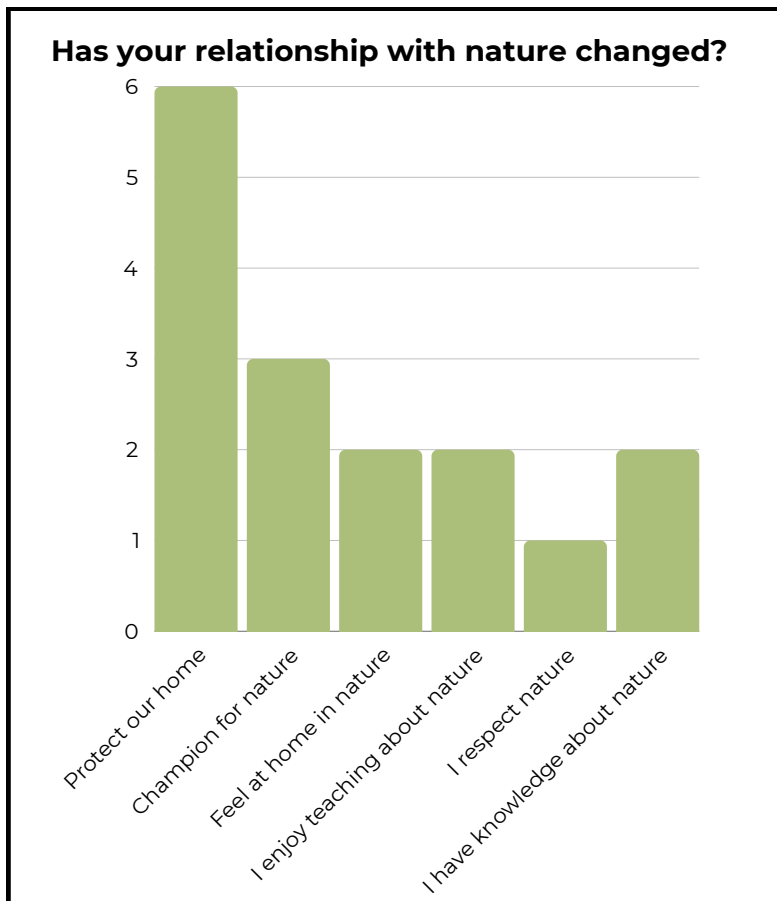
Have you discovered anything about yourself this year?



## Relationship with the Earth

*"I cannot live without nature." - Londeka, Cathulani*

Only one teacher mentioned that her relationship with nature had not changed. She grew up on a farm and was originally an advocate for nature. Six teachers mentioned that they now wish to protect nature - referring to nature as "our home". Three teachers have taken active steps towards protecting nature. One mentioned that she no longer litters and takes her rubbish home with her so that she can recycle it. Another teacher has created her own vegetable garden while another has begun growing and caring for plants.



## Understanding of the child's capabilities

From shouting at a class to sit still and listen - "Do not move, because if you do, what will these people think of us?" - to sitting on the ground and playing games while laughing together. From believing that their class could only learn numbers and colours to teaching about the layers of the ocean and introducing their children to letters so that they can write their names. From viewing the child as naughty to understanding what that child needs, and providing it.

There have been many subtle shifts in the way that the teachers are now engaging with their children. Through their engagements and reflections - such as, "I view the child as a sponge that is ready to absorb all the knowledge and ideas that the world has to offer." - we are able to see their growing understanding of child development. Many of the teachers are eager to learn more so that they can share more knowledge with their children - this highlights their understanding that their children are capable of learning so much.

## *A heartfelt thank you*

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you AESSeal, Grindrod Family Centenary Trust and the Savanna Foundation, our main funders for this project. Their generosity and support encouraged us to leap to this goal. We would also like to thank the Mountain Club of South Africa for collaborating with us on our school excursions and Drakensberg Immersion. A further thank you goes to Arno Pouwels who gave up months to raise funds for CEEE through Walking Home; and everyone that participated in our fundraising drive. Your donations allowed us to complete the project at full capacity - giving every school all that they deserved.



# TRANSFORMATION AT EKUTHULENI



## SUSTAINED MENTORSHIP FOR CHANGE

Throughout 2024, the teachers at Ekuthuleni were equipped and empowered to improve the quality of education that they were delivering to the children. At the beginning of this year, Kinship stepped back into a mentorship role.

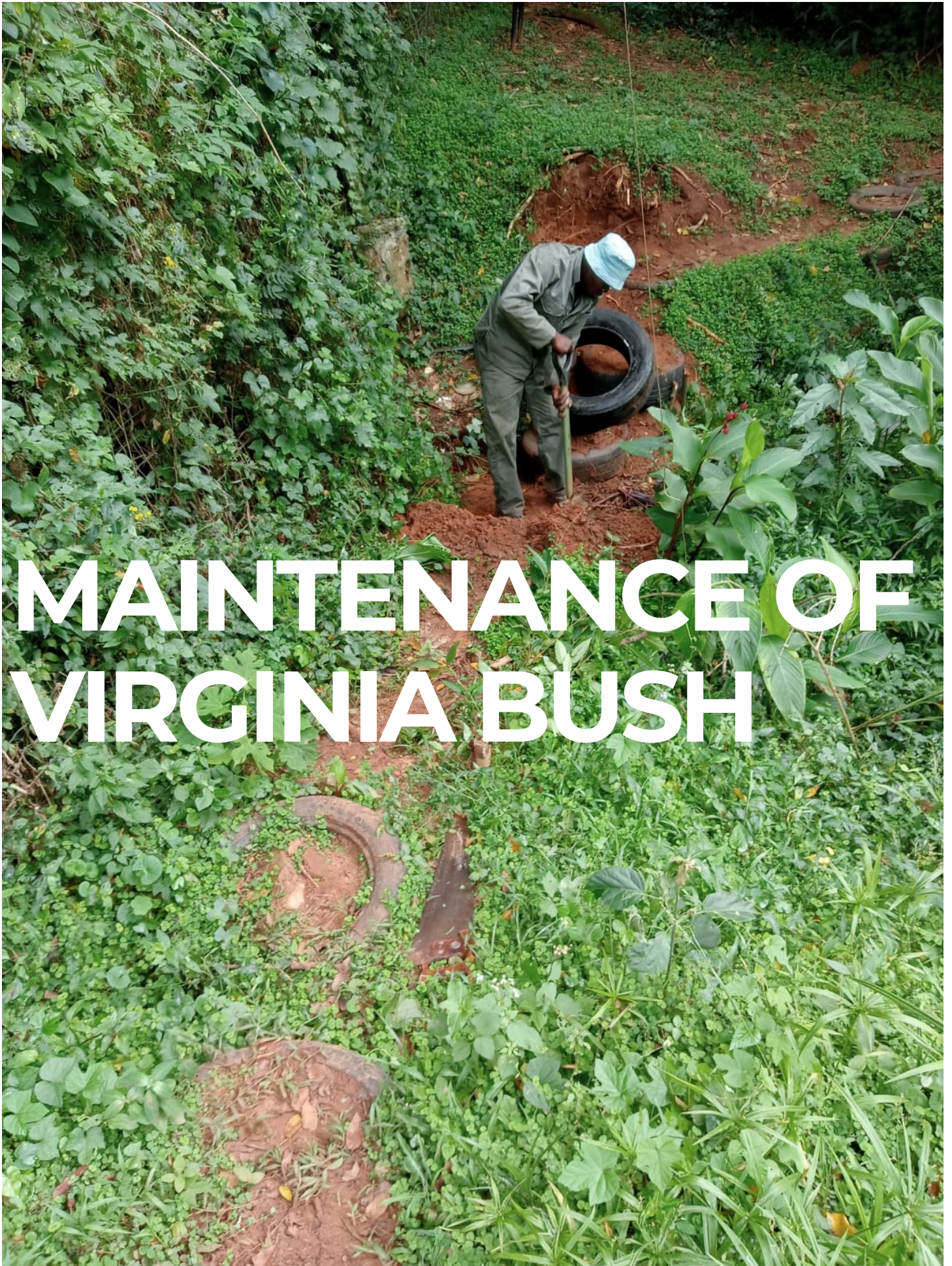
We continued to support Ekuthuleni through school exchanges and dedicated material making workshops. An important element of our work was also monitoring the impact of our joint efforts in 2024 - to ascertain whether the teachers were actioning the skills that they had developed.

**Our aim** was to encourage a sustained transformation in teaching practices. This year the teachers showed initiative in creating their own materials for integration in their classroom. They have developed a routine that the children follow that allows freedom of choice. The level of work completed by the children far surpasses what was previously attempted. The children are happy and very eager to learn. It is obvious that both Cmah and Lindiwe - the lead teachers - feel equipped to continue practicing Montessori Teaching. Their growth in confidence and self-efficacy will allow us to reduce the mentorship provided next year.



*A heartfelt thank you*

Ekuthuleni is a transformed learning environment. The teachers are engaged and confident. The children are engaged, stimulated and happy. Thank you to Ryan, Matt, Nick and Gareth of Sithanda Upliftments for partnering with us on this project. Your support and emotional investment in Doris and her team lie at the heart of all the good that happens at Ekuthuleni. We look forward to a lasting relationship with you and Doris.



# MAINTENANCE OF VIRGINIA BUSH

Moosa is one of the most hard-working men we have ever met. He spends his Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Virginia Bush, completing each tiresome task we give him.

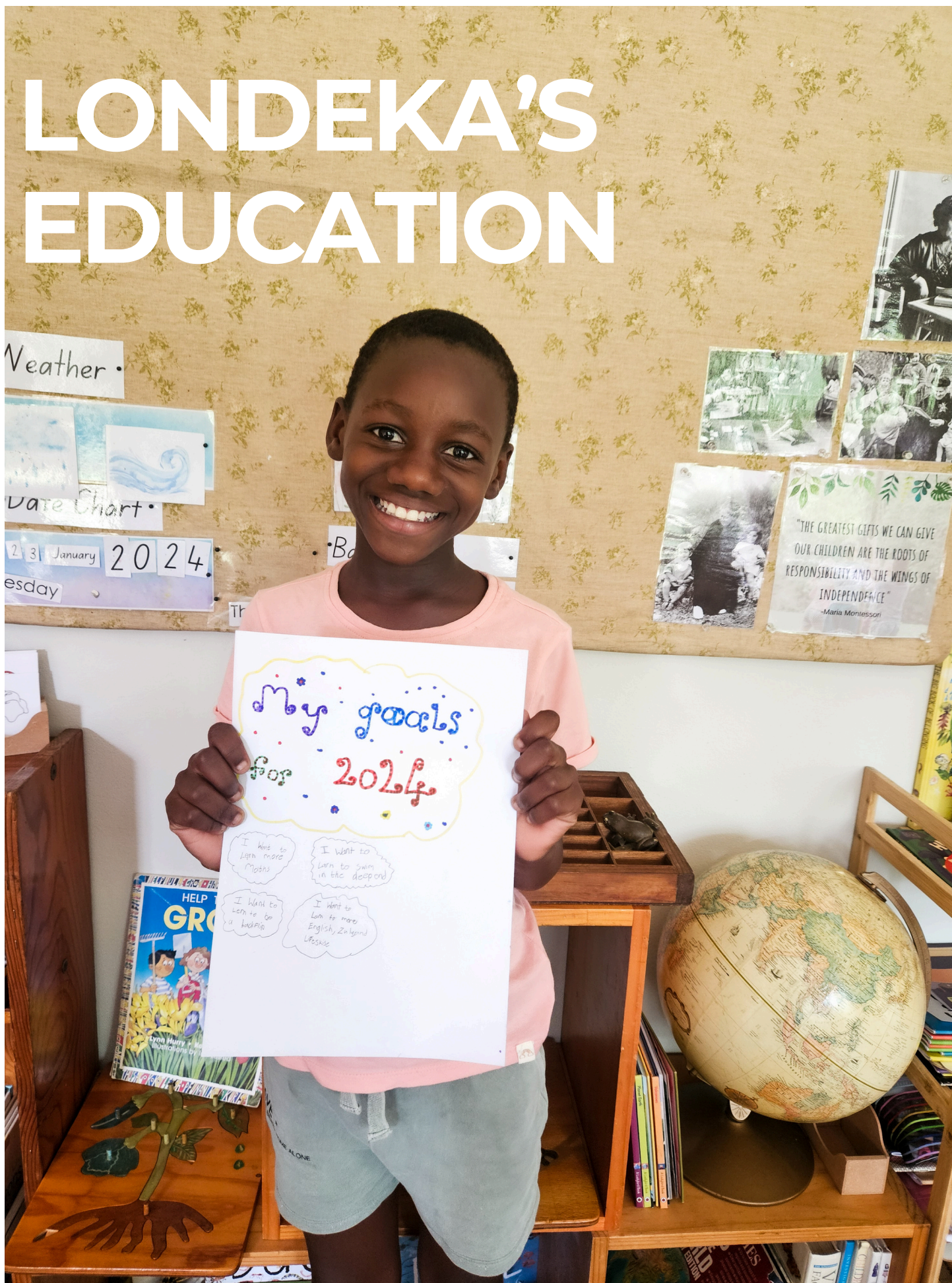
In this past year, he has:

- placed railings on bridges to improve safety
- filled and supported washaways with sandbags
- repaired holes in the boundary fence
- built stairs and balustrades
- cleared and maintained paths
- removed land and water invasives
- removed vagrant dwellings
- conducted thorough litter clean-ups in the bush



*A heartfelt thank you*

We are extremely grateful to our Virginia Bush Community, which monitors the state of the bush and assists us in tasking and leading Moosa. A special thank you goes to Buzz Bolton from Riverside Trail for the time he has spent guiding and assisting Moosa with larger builds. Thank you to everyone who has participated in our Fundraiser Fun Runs over the months. A thank you must also go to the Riverside Trail community for their fundraising efforts and donations towards this work. The funding raised at these events, supplemented by personal donations, has financed all of the materials for the work we have conducted, as well as Moosa's weekly wages. Your support is valued beyond words.





“Determined, meticulous, and helpful - Londeka possesses a combination of qualities that will help her succeed in life.”

Londeka joined Kincottage for Grade 3 in 2023. She arrived with a 98% aggregate for English, yet she was unable to read. We quickly realised the sad reality of her previous schooling experience and set to pave a new path for her future education. After an intensive learning journey at Kincottage, she was ready to integrate into a Model C School. At the beginning of 2025 she began at Virginia Preparatory School, where she has immersed herself in every activity the school offers. Her foundation h

We'd like to thank Londeka's Support Community for their monthly contributions towards Londeka's education at Virginia Prep, transport, extracurricular activities, and extra lessons.

A sincere thank you goes to:

- Bridget Widdows
- Moira Campbell
- Scott Rogers
- Nicky Rodseth
- Christine Loubser
- Lisa Lammers
- Matt Lammers
- Kaylee Smith
- Lisa Lovell
- Michelle Burke
- Zeta Pontin

For changing the trajectory of Londeka's life.





# LOOKING TO 2026



OUR VISION FOR 2026

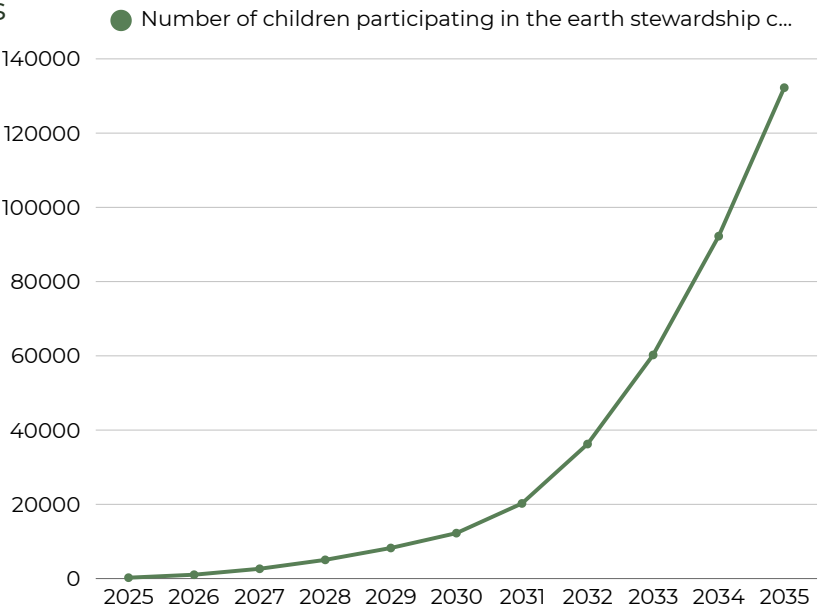
We envisage a community of enthused and empowered teachers fostering an understanding of and appreciation for nature in their ECD Centres. To deepen our relationship and impact at the at our 2025 CEEE graduate schools.

GOALS

Phase two (2026)

- Achieve sustained enthusiasm through continued mentorship of 2025's CEEE Graduates
- Enthuse 15 teachers to educate about nature.
- Empower 15 teachers with the skills and tools to deliver lessons that are engaging and encourage creative and critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- Empower 15 teachers with sufficient knowledge to effectively educate their learners about the environment.
- Facilitate earth stewardship education in 15 underserved Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres by providing them with a robust and effective environmental education curriculum that encourages the development of 21st Century skills & a connection to nature while exceeding the expectations of the CAPS curriculum.
- Have 15 trained teachers championing environmental education in each of their schools - ensuring that their newfound knowledge and skills are applied in the delivery of the provided environmental education curriculum, year on year, reaching many children.
- Empower and equip three ECD centres to lead a Montessori Education.

To view our **project proposal** for the Community Embedded Environmental Education Project or iSambulo Project please contact us at [michaela@kinshipprogramme.com](mailto:michaela@kinshipprogramme.com)



## SUPPORT OUR WORK

Kinship Programme NPC  
ABSA  
Cheque account  
Branch: 632005  
Acc number: 410 661 3870  
Swift: ABSAZAJJ

We are a registered Non-Profit Company, with Section 18A Certification.

We are able to issue tax deduction certificates.

### ZAPPER



### PAYPAL

