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WHY DAKTARI?

Ian and Michele Merrifield started DAKTARI because they did not want to be part of the problems but work toward the solutions.

It is unfair to complain about attitude of uneducated people if you do not give your spirit, time and heart to remedy to this dilemma.

Most people believe the local African people know the bush but unfortunately this is wrong as they live in villages where there is no wildlife left. It has been eliminated generations ago and their knowledge is mainly about cows, donkeys, goats and chickens. Even the vegetation is suffering as trees are usually chopped down to be used as fire wood. Not being educated means not knowing about the damage caused by burning plastic and discarding rubbish in river beds. Most do not even understand the word "environment".

The Limpopo Province welcomes thousands of tourists each year to enjoy our wildlife when the local population cannot afford to access this richness. How can we blame their lack of interest about the environment if this privilege is only reachable to outside visitors who can afford it?

Tourists are all following the same route from the airports to private game reserves. Most of them are complaining about the lack of cultural exchange with the local South Africans. They need/want to expose themselves to the warm welcome and culture our community has to offer.

How can we give the sense of responsibility to our entire nation toward rhino poaching if we do not explain the consequences of such a terrible act?

How can we live in such a beautiful area and not share our vision with our neighborhood less advantaged than ourselves?

The Limpopo Province is known as one the poorest, least educated areas in South Africa. Just a few facts from The South African Institute of Race Relations:

There are only 4.2 % of South Africans aged of 20 and older who have completed post-school education.

Limpopo Province has a high rate of 49% unemployment and 80 % of school leavers are unable to find work



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 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION 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.

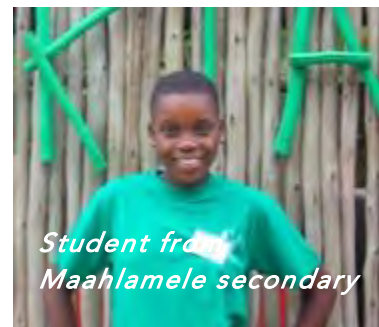
Though not environmentally-focused, DAKTARI's social talks and politeness lesson are included in the program to address some serious issues that the children face at home. DAKTARI's friendly environment gives the children the confidence to speak openly about their concerns and needs.



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 a game lodge. On Wednesday, the children go to the neighboring 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.

*I promise I will respect others
I promise I will never pollute water
I promise I will be clean when I go to school
I promise I will teach people how to respect others
I promise I will teach others how to take care of animals
I promise I will do my best at school*



*Student from
Maahlamele secondary*

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

Time Table & Lessons

MONDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:10	Dog walk
07:30	Breakfast/Clean up
08:00	Morning Stabling (animals)
09:00	Intro/tour/rules
10:45	Survey
11:30	Politeness
12:30	Lunch/clean up – Swim
14:00	Making your own opinion
14:30	Tracks
15:30	Game - Minigolf
16:30	Afternoon Stabling (animals)
17:00	Kids shower time
17:30	Geography
18:30	Dinner/Clean up
19:30	Game – Pictionary
20:30	Bed time

TUESDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:10	Dog walk
07:30	Breakfast/Clean up
08:00	Morning Stabling (animals)
09:00	The Environment
10:00	Water testing
11:00	Plastics & Environment
12:30	Lunch/Clean up – Swim
14:00	Animal knowledge
15:30	Anti-poaching
16:30	Afternoon Stabling (animals)
17:00	Kids shower time
17:30	Social talk (respect)
18:30	Dinner/Clean up
19:30	Night safari
20:00	Game – Maths bingo
20:30	Bed time

WEDNESDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:10	Dog walk
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Morning Stabling (animals)
09:00	Job Opps In game reserves
10:00	Makalali trip
12:30	Lunch/Clean up – Swim
15:00	Knowledge hunt
16:30	Afternoon Stabling (animals)
17:00	Kids shower time
17:30	Social talk (substances)
18:30	Dinner/Clean up
19:15	Movie – The Lion King
20:45	Bed time

THURSDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:10	Dog walk
07:30	Breakfast/Clean up
08:00	Morning Stabling (animals)
09:00	Bush walk
11:00	The Lion King follow-up
11:30	Makalali follow-up
12:30	Lunch/Clean up – Swim
14:00	Art
15:00	Making SA a better place
16:30	Afternoon Stabling (animals)
17:00	Kids shower time
17:30	Social talk (safe sex/HIV/AIDS)
18:30	Dinner/Clean up
19:30	Bonfire – singing & dancing
20:30	Bed time

FRIDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:10	Dog walk
07:30	Breakfast/Clean up
08:00	Morning Stabling (animals)
09:00	Survey
09:45	Making your own opinion
10:00	Rubbish collection
10:30	Book coloring & Volunteer meeting
11:00	Kids promises ceremony
11:15	Kids departure
12:30	Lunch/Clean up
14:00	The big clean

SATURDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
07:00	Stabling
08:00	Breakfast/Clean up
08:30	Town trip
16:30	Afternoon Stabling (animals)

SUNDAY	
TIME	ACTIVITY/CLASS
10:00	Brunch

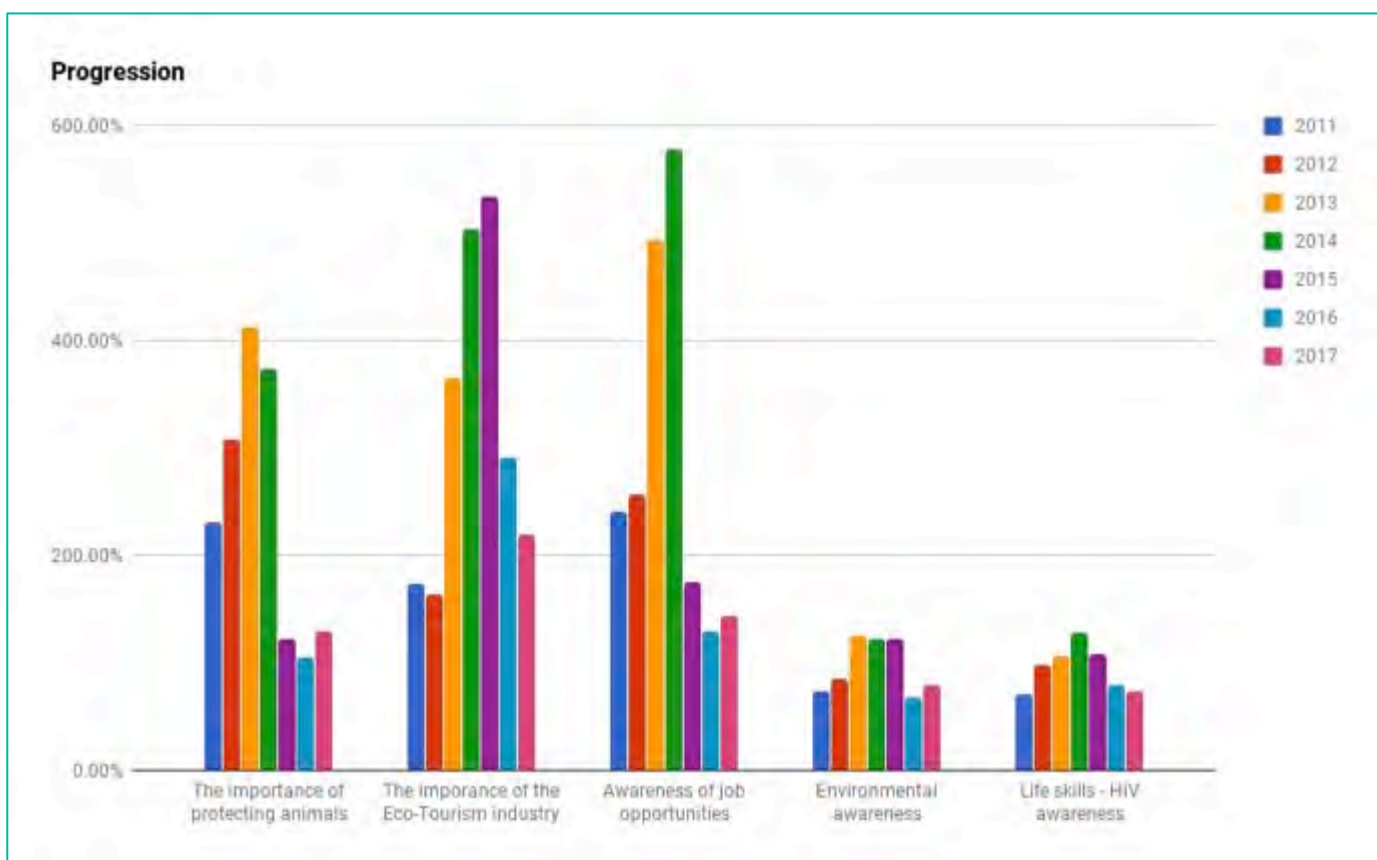
Our Impact

At the beginning of the children's stay at Daktari, they each fill in a general survey that works as a level indicator. The questions are based on crucial points of their education that they may or may not have learnt in school or in life, as of yet.

It is also used as a progression sheet throughout their week, as they are asked to fill out the same questions at the end of their stay.

Daktari also uses this survey as an indicator as to what might need to be improved on their program.

Subject questions asked to the children	PROGRESSION						
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
The importance of protecting animals	231.25%	307.69%	411.63%	374.29%	121.88%	104.93%	129.00%
The importance of the Eco-Tourism industry	173.91%	163.64%	365.63%	504.17%	533.33%	291.18%	219.00%
Awareness of job opportunities	240.00%	256.52%	493.33%	578.95%	174.19%	129.23%	143.00%
Environmental awareness	73.17%	85.29%	124.42%	122.08%	121.88%	68.06%	79.00%
Life skills - HiV awareness	70.45%	96.88%	106.78%	127.63%	108.11%	79.19%	73.00%



Other Impact

Nothing motivates us to continue our vital work like successful outcomes!

DAKTARI regularly meets with the teachers and headmasters of our local schools. These have reported significant progress in the students who have attended DAKTARI. Some of these improvements include increased concentration in the classroom, a greater motivation to speak up in class, an increase in politeness and self-esteem and a higher pass rate at the end of the year for those who have attended DAKTARI.

There have been noted cases where DAKTARI students have stopped the formation of poaching parties within their villages. There have also been a number of instances where children from DAKTARI have called Nature Conservation when wild animals have been found close to their homes. On one occasion, this led to the rescue and relocation of a cheetah and her cubs.

On many occasions children in the village have called us when they have found animals in the mountains or in the surrounding bush. Several duikers and many tortoises have been saved. The children being so proud of their involvement and action is a tremendous reward for DAKTARI and its team.

THE OUTREACH PROGRAM



The program is split into four parts:

1 -The Eco Clubs

The Eco Clubs emerged organically. A group of learners at Maahlamele and Rakgolokwana secondary school were meeting after school to discuss their time at DAKTARI and what they learned. They included students who did not have the opportunity to follow our program at DAKTARI to share their experience and new knowledge. 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 Outreach 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. Lessons are a complement of the school curriculum with activities/experiences the teachers might not have had time to approach.

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.

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.



2 - The Job Hunting Program

During weeks when the Grade 8 children are writing exams, local youth come to the camp from the nearby villages for the career guidance program (4.5 days). This program focuses on giving these youths 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 and following up on applications. The youth are given certificates and recommendations if needed.

3 - Community Development

DAKTARI has a close relationship with the nearby community of the OAKS village and aims to trigger self-employment. Two local guest houses have been created and generate an extra income for two families by accommodating international volunteers who want to experience 24 hours with them. DAKTARI's objective is to encourage the village to become a touristic village which will create more employment.

4 - Waste Management

DAKTARI is continuously in contact with the community and municipality to find resources and solutions for the waste management of the nearby village of the OAKS.



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.

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.

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.



Martin, DAKTARI's cheetah

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.



at 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. After school, the unemployment rate for youth is more than 50%. 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

38%

the rate of unemployment in Limpopo province

4,5%

of jobs in South Africa come from the tourism industry

21%

of residents in Limpopo have their waste collected by the state

58%

of unemployed black people in South Africa did not finish school

37%

of students achieve matriculation after Grade 12

Budget 2018

Annual Budget 2018/2019					
Description	Educational programme	Wildllife Orphanage	Outreach & Community Development	Running Cost	Total Expense/Income
<i>Expenses</i>					
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
Total Expenses	R995,535.71	R275,357.14	R205,107.14	R1,774,000.00	R3,250,000.00
<i>Income</i>					
Volunteers					1,400,000.00
Sales					100,000.00
Goal Fundraising					1,750,000.00
Annual Budget					3,250,000.00

We are requesting your support toward our fundraising goal for any projects (Educational program, Wildlife Orphanage, Outreach & Community Development).

Explanation budget for Educational program, wildlife orphanage, outreach

- Food includes: food for the children, for the volunteer teachers and the volunteers helping with the project and food animals for the wildlife Orphanage
- General expenses include: exceptional entertainment expenses, general medical, and uniforms for children and volunteers
- Consumable includes: pool chemicals, toilet paper, other cleaning material, garden plants, decoration, and gift for children
- Consumable includes: pool chemicals, toilet paper, other cleaning material, garden plants, decoration, and gift for children
- Transport includes: fuel for all vehicles, Repair and maintenance cars, licenses, vehicle hire and tracking system
- The project is located on a private game reserve that we are renting. It is important to be located in the bush for better children's immersion in nature. To be in a remote area increase our cost of petrol for traveling. There is no electricity on the farm and Daktari is putting all effort to create a green environment, although it rises our costs.

Explanation budget for running cost

- Marketing includes: printing of brochures, poster, advertising for the volunteer program and cost of events
- General expenses include: Cleaning, computer expenses, legal fee, subscriptions, telephone and fax, travel and accommodation
- Repair and Maintenance includes: Building, renovations, tools, other equipment, replacement kitchen, linen, and furniture
- Accounting includes: accountant and bookkeeping
- Insurance includes: all insurance for vehicle, material and public liability
- Cost of sale includes: beverage and curios for sale
- Salaries: see below:

Salaries	Per Month	Per Year	Total cost of employment	
2 Directors	R34,000.00	R408,000.00	Salaries	R900,000.00
Office Assistant	R8,000.00	R96,000.00	temp/casual	R60,000.00
2 Kitchen staff	R8,500.00	R102,000.00	UIF	R15,000.00
3 Cleaning staff	R12,000.00	R144,000.00	Compensation	R15,000.00
3 general Labourers	R12,500.00	R150,000.00	Food for staff	R50,000.00
Total Salaries per month	R75,000.00	R900,000.00	Total cost of employment	R1,040,000.00

Success Stories

Mina Malepe

Mina was one of the first children we welcome at DAKTARI for environmental education in 2005.

Here what she quoted: "... In 2005, when I was in Grade 9 at Rakgolokwana High School, I was selected as one of the learners who got an opportunity to go to DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage and be part of their Eco-Club. During this period, I realized that I wanted to do Nature Conservation, but my focus was more on Veterinary Sciences. I didn't know which one to choose until I went to Daktari where I learnt how to make good choices in terms of my future plans and studies. I decided to do nature conservation because I was always feeding animals and I enjoyed every moment of doing that - I wanted to conserve, preserve and maintain the natural resources. I continued on visiting Daktari during weekends and holidays, because I wanted to learn and gain better knowledge of conservation. I knew that I had the potential to become a conservationist and I was always going the extra mile. Daktari has done more than what people can offer, they gave me knowledge, awareness, skills and motivated me to strive for the best ..."



Today Mina is proudly a village woman employed as a Data Collator/Field Assistant Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region (K2C). She has a National Diploma in Nature Conservation and is currently registered as a B-tech student doing her last module in Plant Studies.

Kutullo

Kutullo first joined the Daktari Outreach Program during 2012 after passing his Matric. He demonstrated a passion and talent for conservation during the lessons and with the help of Daktari he received a bursary at the South African Wildlife College. After 4 months of hard work and studies he obtained his NQF Level 5 Environmental Education & Leadership Certificate and his NQF Level 2 Unarmed Field Ranger Certificate. After passing and receiving his certificates, he went on to help with hands on practical work at the Khamai Reptile Centre in Hoedspruit for 3 months.



Kutullo was then offered a 3-month internship as a Trainee Field Guide at a nearby nature reserve, where he gained more practical experience in his new-found career. He is now employed in this game reserve and has passed some final exams and paid for some compulsory licenses to be a fully-fledged Professional Field Guide.

Kutullo is 22 years old and lives in Limpopo Province, one of the poorest areas in South Africa. Unemployment is very high, there are very little opportunities for young people and it's fair to say that life is pretty hard. Not only does Kutullo had the desire and motivation to improve his own life but he also wanted to provide for his family and young daughter.

Portia

DAKTARI is constantly working in improving environmental awareness and economic development. Portia achieved her goal by becoming a permanent full-time waitress at Makalali Game Lodge.

Portia was attending the DAKTARI Eco-Clubs when we met her and noticed her potential. She then spent a couple of weeks at DAKTARI as a volunteer. She was able to acquire valuable skills by practicing her English, learning to interact with the other international volunteers and as a result grew in confidence. Since then, DAKTARI Outreach Program has helped Portia to find a three-month training placement as a receptionist at Makalali Game Lodge. We are very proud to learn that she has signed a permanent contract as a waitress there.



Grace

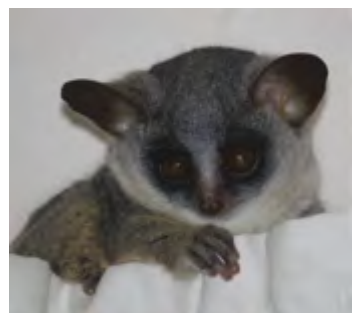
Grace first joined the Daktari Outreach Program in 2012 after thoroughly enjoying her initial week at Daktari, she had recently moved from her hometown in a big city to a small village after her father lost his job. Grace was brought up to speak English and Zulu but really struggled in her new home and school where they only spoke Sepedi. The school element was especially challenging for her as in order to pass any Grade the school stipulates that students must also pass in Sepedi language. This very bright and intelligent young girl was losing all hope and motivation for a promising future. With the help of Daktari and an appeal to our supporters we managed to enroll Grace at Southern Cross School in Hoedspruit, where the first language is English.



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 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 have 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.



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. 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.

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 Village.



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 genets 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. They have been successfully raised by us with the assistance of our dog, Candy, who even produced milk for the baby genets.

Kids leaving their village to come and spend a week end at Daktari - parents worried

One Saturday, in the late afternoon, as we were going out with our vehicle, we found three young boys walking on the dirt road toward DAKTARI. It started to be dark and we were wondering what they were doing on the road, alone at that time of the day! They told us that they heard of DAKTARI by their friends and they also wanted to experience the place. We obviously took them to the camp and phoned their parents who were very worried and had already set up searches with the whole village. The children had spent the whole day walking to come to DAKTARI! We accommodated them for the night and gave them a great dinner and breakfast before taking them back safely to their parents.



Jubilant

The volunteers requested that I (Michele Merrifield) interfered in the classroom as the whole group of children was bullying Jubilant a very shy and introverted girl. I gave the children a lecture about respect of others and uplift Jubilant to such a point that all the children had to apologize to her. I personally took a picture of me hugging her and bought a picture frame for it. When I gave it to her I asked her to keep it with her in case somebody would annoy her and that she can remember that I am on her side, she can trust herself and she must never let this happen again. A few weeks later, Jubilant wrote me a letter which brought tears in my eyes. She explained that I changed her life, she now has many friends and they respect her.



Ernest

Ernest Buthelezi is a personable young male Zulu. He was working with a "Save the Rhino" organisation in Natal. The leader of the organisation was leaving the country and posted on social media that he would recommend Ernest in any nature related position. Michele saw the post and offered Ernest a position at DAKTARI as a volunteer coordinator. This was to give him some experience and he received a small stipend, but also free accommodation and food. He stayed at DAKTARI for a year, and eventually DAKTARI managed to get him a chance to study for FGASA with a training academy, Bushwise. Bushwise offered him free training, accommodation and food, and also gave him a small stipend. Ernest completed the course, obtaining a pass rate of 85%! Whilst at DAKTARI he was sponsored and he managed to get his driver's license and PDP (Professional Driving Permit). DAKTARI is proud of his efforts, and he returned to Natal where he will apply for a permanent ranger position.



Alex

Alex Seotlo was discovered by our Outreach program to be passionate about the environment. Applications were made and DAKTARI managed to get him a bursary to study at the Southern African wildlife College. He attended a six-month course as a Field Ranger, which he passed successfully. He then, by his own efforts, applied for an additional bursary to study a further three months as a Field Guide, which he also passed successfully. After he passed, DAKTARI managed to find a sponsor for him to attend a driving school, and he successfully passed his driver's license. He is now getting work experience and guidance in looking for a field guide position.



Willington

Willington is a young man who did not finish school. He was one of the first children at DAKTARI. He kept in touch with us, and we eventually offered him a volunteer experience as animal manager. We trained him at the wildlife orphanage and arranged for him to attend several courses, one of which was a wildlife rehabilitation course, and another a tracker training course. We managed to get him enrolled in the Kruger2Canyon Biosphere program of Environmental Monitors, and he is now a full time paid employee as the animal manager at DAKTARI through them. He is quite adept on the computer and is always trying to improve the camps of the animals, coming up with innovative ways to give them enrichment. DAKTARI was also able to find a sponsor so could undergo his driver's license, and get his Professional Driver's license. This enables him to be more useful and able to drive DAKTARI vehicles when necessary



Patience

Patience (also called Ananda) first came to DAKTARI as a student who was amongst a group of youngsters who were given career guidance. She impressed the Directors of DAKTARI and was given a position as a volunteer coordinator. DAKTARI managed to get her full time employment by the Kruger to Canyon Biosphere as an Environmental Monitor, working at DAKTARI. DAKTARI motivated her, and she applied, by herself, to become a nurse. This application was successful, and she left DAKTARI, after one year's service, to undergo her nurse training.



Gloria

It is surprising how DAKTARI is making an impact on many different ways in the heart of the children.

One evening, around 9 pm, a young girl that we will call "Gloria" to respect her identity, phoned us. She explained her parents "threw her out" of home. She was crying, alone in the village, at night, and did not know where to go. DAKTARI does not work as social workers, we are not trained for that but we could not stay helpless. We asked Gloria the name of her best friend and how far she lived from where she was. According to her answers we anticipated it was safe to walk there and we asked her to phone us as soon as she would arrive at her friend's home. We waited patiently by the phone, calling her every 5 mn to find out if she was all right. Once at her friend's house, where she could be accommodated for the night, we sms her the phone number of the local social worker from whom she could get help with the troubles she had with her family. It is important for DAKTARI to stay focus and not to be involved in matters for which we are not trained. We also cannot discuss or argue with parents about the education their children receive at home but can always give advices to children in need.

This is how we found out that sometime we are also seen as surrogate parents.





Thank You!

