



Jane Goodall's
Roots & Shoots
South Africa

2025

Impact Report



Summary



2025 was a year of building resilience and impact for Roots & Shoots South Africa. Our programme consolidated its base in Mpumalanga and expanded its reach around the country to strengthen partnerships and empower young people to take action for animals, people, and the environment.

The year was deeply marked by the passing of Dr Jane Goodall, whose remarkable legacy continues to inspire every aspect of our work. Her passing brought sadness across our network but also renewed determination to carry forward her message of hope and compassion. Dr Jane's belief that every individual can make a difference, was reflected in the hundreds of young people who participated and made an impact in the year's projects.

Our Roots & Shoots volunteers and members faced the urgency of interlocking social, environmental and conservation issues. Through small actions, that have added up, they have made a real difference for everyone they share communities with.

**“If we all get together,
we can truly make a
difference, but we must
act now. The window of
time is closing.”**

— Dr Jane Goodall
(1934 - 2025)



2025 in Numbers

26 active Roots & Shoots groups
400 active members engaged regular activities
20 volunteers gave **~150** combined hours/week
57 workshops and volunteer events
1330 youth engaged in awareness raising, talks and community service

REACH



5 habitat restoration efforts
310 bags of litter picked up
50 trees planted

RESTORATION

550 kg + organic produce grown
supported **6** permaculture gardens
added **7** tonnes of biochar to the soil helping
to remove **25** tonnes of CO₂ from the air

GARDENS



Partnered to build **4** classrooms
using **51 500** eco-bricks
recycling **28** tonnes of plastic

RECYCLING



Animals

Project Highlight



The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Mbombela Roots & Shoots group supported animal welfare through close collaboration with Chimp Eden, contributing to the wellbeing of 33 rescued chimpanzees. Four TUT student interns were placed full-time at the Jane Goodall Institute South Africa, where they gained hands-on experience in conservation and sanctuary-based animal care.

The group maintained a permaculture vegetable garden that produced approximately 400 kg of fresh, nutrient-rich food for the chimpanzees over the year. This produce supplemented the chimps' diets and helped support the sanctuary during periods when sourcing food from local farmers was more difficult. Interns also assisted with food preparation and daily feeding routines.



Working alongside animal care staff, the interns supported essential daily tasks and created enrichment items such as swings, ice treats, toys, and bamboo branches. These activities provided important cognitive and physical stimulation, encouraging natural behaviours including foraging, problem-solving, and exploration. Students also helped maintain and improve enclosure habitats, making them more comfortable and reflective of natural environments.

Beyond animal care, the group supported educational visits, assisting children and teenagers to deepen their understanding of conservation and environmental issues. Roots & Shoots South Africa also contributed to Chimp Eden's sustainability efforts by helping establish recycling and composting systems at the sanctuary.

“ Humans should not interfere with animals in their natural habitat...[the chimps] all have different personalities just like us humans.” — Petro Sibiya

“Observing the rescued chimpanzees made me realize how psychological well-being, social bonds, and freedom of choice matter to animals.” — Pride Mogane

“Animals need to be kept safe especially chimpanzees as they are going extinct. No to hunting.” — Mpho Masutha

“We need to treat animals as good as we treat one another we as human because those animals also play a good and big role in the ecosystem.” — Thobeka Chibi



The Roots & Shoots TUT Group

People

Project Highlight



Throughout 2024 and 2025, Roots & Shoots volunteers from across Gauteng contributed to a significant people-centred project by creating thousands of eco-bricks that were used to construct a new Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre in the community of Diepsloot.

In partnership with the Earthly Touch Foundation and Cherith Projects, Roots & Shoots supported the development of the Greater You Are ECD Centre, which includes four classrooms and a community garden. The classrooms were completed in June and welcomed their first cohort of 41 toddlers, providing a safe, stimulating learning environment during a critical stage of early childhood development.

The construction of the classrooms was made possible through funds raised by a Roots & Shoots group at Solihull Prep School in the United Kingdom, demonstrating the power of youth-led action and international solidarity.

In total, 51,500 eco-bricks were used in the construction process, repurposing approximately 28 tonnes of plastic that would otherwise have contributed to pollution.

The accompanying garden includes plots designated for vulnerable families in Diepsloot to support food security, as well as a terraced learning garden reserved for children at the ECD centre. This space enables young learners to explore growing vegetables and plants, fostering early environmental awareness, practical skills, and a sense of connection to nature.

The toddlers and children at the centre now have a safe environment that will support



their learning. The thick walls of the classrooms mean the buildings are very well insulated, keeping the kids warm through winter and cool in summer so they can focus on learning and having fun. The project may also grow early childhood development outcomes helping to lay stronger foundations for children's long-term educational success. The projects benefits will continue for many years.

The beauty of this project is how many hands came together to make it happen. From the students at Solihull who worked hard to fundraise to the many hundreds of volunteers, many of them Roots & Shoots youth, who created thousands of eco-bricks, it shows what we can do when we combine efforts to make a difference.



“We must not give up hope. Every single day that we live, we make some impact on the planet. We have a choice as to what kind of impact that is.”
- Dr Jane Goodall

Environment

Project Highlights



Roots & Shoots volunteers and groups in Mpumalanga led and participated in a series of environmental initiatives focused on litter removal, alien invasive vegetation clearing, ecosystem restoration, indigenous tree planting and citizen science.



World Water Day Wetland Clean Up

112 volunteers removed 150 bags of litter and cleared 450 meters of riverbanks overgrown with alien invasive vegetation in a park in Mbombela.

Earth Day Clean Up

30 volunteers collected 57 bags of litter and cleared 300 meters of invasive species in a park in Mbombela.

World Planting Day

22 SANParks Junior Honorary Rangers planted 19 indigenous trees in Umhloti Nature Reserve, contributing to local biodiversity restoration.

World Environment Day Clean Up

30 volunteers removed 53 bags of litter and cleared additional invasive vegetation in a park in Mbombela.





World Clean Up Day

65 volunteers collected 50 bags of litter and cleared two-thirds of a park affected by alien invasives in White River.

Ecosystem Restoration in the Blyde Canyon

University of Mpumalanga students helped clear a thicket of invasive pine trees in a critical area near the Kadisi River, helping to restore a sensitive and ecologically important habitat.

Great Southern Bioblitz

University of Mpumalanga volunteers participated in citizen science effort to document and help protect plant and insect biodiversity in the Sudwala area.



Participating and leading these projects allowed volunteers to connect meaningfully with the environments around them, from local parks near their schools to unique and vulnerable mountain, forest, and grassland habitats. Many volunteers gained hands-on experience in conservation, community service, litter removal, habitat restoration, and citizen science, building practical skills and environmental knowledge.



People, Animals and the Environment

Project Highlight



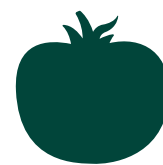
The Gardens of Hope Program, funded with a grant from DP World, started in September 2025 and holistically benefits animals, people and the environment.

Working with 12 university student volunteers and 120 children and youth, Gardens of Hope project created three well equipped, sustainable food gardens at Vulamasango Primary School in Kanyamazane, Boschrand Primary School in Msholozhi, and the Teka Takho Disabled Care Centre in Kabokweni. All are no-fee schools serving communities facing socioeconomic barriers such as unemployment and food insecurity.

With the support of permaculture expert Audry Rikhotso, a focus of the program has been providing young people with the skills to design and create productive food gardens to improve diets and food security. The program is supported by a

curriculum that provides practical training in sustainable techniques such as mulching and composting, and connects food gardening to biodiversity and climate change. University students took an active role in leading sessions and teaching participants about food gardening.

A core feature of the program is teaching young people about conservation and animal welfare through an all-expenses-covered trip to Chimp Eden, where volunteers guided participants through the sanctuary and taught them about chimpanzees, the illegal wildlife trade and animal welfare. The outing also included a nature scavenger hunt in the Umhloti Nature Reserve, deepening appreciation for plants, insects and other animals.



People: The food gardens produce nutritious vegetables for school feeding schemes and vulnerable families, improving food security and child

nutrition. Students and volunteers gained practical gardening skills, including planting, composting and growing, enabling them to grow food at home, reduce household costs and build resilience.



Animals: Through the project curriculum and a conservation learning visit to Chimp Eden, responsible attitudes toward animals were encouraged and harmful misconceptions reduced. By learning about chimpanzees rescued from the illegal wildlife trade and animal welfare, participants were inspired to become advocates for animals and support conservation.

Environment: The project helped communities adapt to and mitigate climate change through seven tonnes of bio-char dug into garden soils to store carbon and retain moisture. Training in permaculture taught regenerative practices that improve soil health, support biodiversity and build climate resilience.

The Gardens of Hope project is already strengthening food security, building practical skills among young people and volunteers, and fostering positive attitudes toward conservation, animal welfare and environmental stewardship. The project is leading to increased confidence in food gardening, greater awareness of climate and biodiversity issues, and strong enthusiasm from schools and community members to sustain and expand the gardens beyond the project period. A full impact report will be shared after project impact surveys are completed later in the year.



Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing

A highlight of the DP World Gardens of Hope project is a partnership with a community garden in Kanyamazane, where small-scale farmers have an extraordinary ability to grow abundant crops with limited resources while looking after local rivers and the environment.



Many of these farmers have decades of experience and many generations of knowledge. In 2025, R&S SA started to source seedlings grown by them to plant in school gardens and has been working to develop reciprocity with them in a shared effort to strengthen local food security and help pass on indigenous knowledge. We donated tools and supplies of the farmers' choosing, including watering cans, seeds, garden forks and organic fertiliser. Thanks to the support from BIO Char, we have also provided biochar to both enrich soils and help fight climate change. In turn, the farmers taught R&S students from nearby Vulamasango Primary School about food gardening. The project has been significant in passing on indigenous knowledge and fostering meaningful connections between young people, local farmers, and the environment.





Creating a Mini Library



In 2025, Roots & Shoots volunteers came together to create a mini-library and garden at Mmamogaswa Primary school, a school with 150 learners in rural Mpumalanga. Ruby de Carvalho, an architecture student and R&S volunteer in Joburg, built a book collection box placed at Jackson's Real Food Market and collected books and vegetable seeds. The items were sent to Mmamogaswa, where volunteer Zoe Mahoney-Maver worked with students to create a mini library and small vegetable garden with the students at the primary school. The school is in a very rural community that faces intense infrastructure challenges, so the making of a mini library and garden was a boost to students and staff.

Wot If? Trust Highlights

Our Roots & Shoots group at the Wot If? Trust in Diepsloot supported the circular economy to learn about recycling. The ~100 Roots & Shoots members exchange recyclables, seeds and compostable material, earning "eco-bucks" which can be spent on essential supplies like toiletries, clothes, and non-perishable foodstuffs. This year, Roots & Shoots supporters continued to donate food, clothing, games, stationery and other useful items to the Eco-Exchange at the Wot If? Trust. The exchange forms a part of a wider environmental education effort run by dedicated volunteers at the Wot If? Trust.



The Roots & Shoots group at the Wot If? Trust also created a beautiful banner that represents life in Diepsloot, the activities of Roots & Shoots South Africa, and our country's unique biodiversity that will be on display at Dr Jane's Dream, the Goodall Centre for Hope, opening in October 2026 in Arusha, Tanzania. We are also proud that Palesa Moreku from the Wot If? Trust represented South Africa at the global Roots & Shoots youth retreat in Malaysia this year.



After the trip, Palesa reflected:

"Young people everywhere share the same drive to make a difference. Despite our diverse backgrounds, we spoke the same language of empathy and action."



Thank You!

A big thank you to Roots & Shoots South Africa's volunteers, members, teachers, supporters, donors and advisors. It's only through these partnerships that Roots & Shoots South Africa can make an impact for people, animals and the environment.

Together we can, together we will, together we must, change the world! |

Advisory Committee

- Alexandra Howard
- Aslıhan Niksarlı
- Evelyn Deiner
- Gary Deiner
- Kayla Hovelmeier
- Palesa Moreku
- Rita Groenewald
- Simnikiwe Mabece
- Tracey Parsons

Donors and Fundraisers

- DP World
- Farm Sanctuary South Africa
- Saunders Family
- Solihull Preparatory School

In-Kind Supporters

- BIOchar
- Ezi Mini Skip Hire
- Jonsson Workwear Nelspruit
- Lasher Tools
- Mvelo Skip Hire
- Oasis Nelspruit

Partners

- Chimp Eden
- Earthly Touch Foundation
- GeaSphere
- Hack and Hike Blyde
- Jackson's Real Food Market
- Kanyamazane Community Garden
- Lima Rural Development Foundation
- Pacifico Task Force
- Power of 8000 and White River Youth Forum
- Resanto Pty Ltd
- The Wot If? Trust
- Young Wildlife Photographers of Southern Africa

Active Schools

- American International School of Johannesburg
- Boschrand Primary School
- Curro Nelspruit
- Forres Preparatory School
- Greater You Are ECD Centre
- Kingsmead College
- Khensani's Collection
- Lydenburg High School
- Mmamogaswa Primary School
- Penryn College
- Teka Takho Disabled Care Centre
- Tshwane University of Technology Mbombela
- University of Mpumalanga
- Vulamasango Primary School



Report compiled by Maru Attwood,
Roots & Shoots South Africa National
Coordinator.

groups@rootsandshoots.org.za
www.rootsandshoots.org.za
[+27 \(0\) 72 723 9256](tel:+270727239256)