



Singita
**LOWVELD
TRUST**

Mid-Year Impact Report

2026

INTRODUCTION TO THE SINGITA LOWVELD TRUST (SLT)

The Singita Lowveld Trust (SLT), Singita's non-profit partner in South Africa, is committed to conserving South Africa's wilderness while fostering meaningful partnerships with neighbouring communities. Guided by Singita's 100-year purpose, SLT supports the conservation of healthy ecosystems, contributing to a landscape where wildlife and neighbouring communities flourish together in the Greater Kruger region.

SLT is a recognised leader in purpose driven initiatives that champion biodiversity, sustainability, and community partnerships, with a well-established 20-year track record in this region. Moving beyond traditional conservation approaches, SLT drives transformative and collaborative projects, inspiring positive social and environmental change.

We invite you to join us in being part of a lasting impact on South Africa's remarkable natural and cultural heritage.



The first five years of a child’s life are critical for shaping their future success, with 85% of brain development occurring during this period, alongside physical growth and emotional development milestones.



Early Childhood Development

Our Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme remains one of the Trust’s long-term flagship initiatives, underpinning a sustained investment in the foundation of education, continually growing our reach and deepening the impact.

In 2026, this programme welcomed 10 additional ECD centres in the region into the support programme, bringing the total programme reach to:

27 ECD CENTRES
across 13 villages

114 EDUCATOR PRACTITIONERS
and centre managers

99 CLASSROOMS

OVER **3,000** CHILDREN enrolled

All new centres have completed detailed baseline assessments of their facilities, the practitioners, as well as individual child assessments (4 -5-year-olds), to inform the Trust’s structured support programme for these centres.

STRENGTHENING QUALITY LEARNING

The programme focuses on:

- Resourcing (providing age-appropriate outdoor play equipment, furniture and educational classroom resources to support play-based learning, creativity, and child development)
- Educator practitioner training and mentorship
- Practical implementation of the National Curriculum Framework
- Classroom layout and resource use
- Parent and caregiver engagement
- Centre Manager leadership development

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SAFE, PLAY-BASED LEARNING

Over the past five years, SLT has supported 17 rural ECD centres, many of which previously lacked basic health and safety equipment, educational toys, and furniture. The Trust has **provided all 67 classrooms across these 17 centers with age-appropriate educational materials** - toys, books, puzzles, arts and crafts, stationery, outdoor play equipment, furniture, safety equipment, musical instruments, and kitchen supplies.

An **early highlight of 2026 has been the classroom resource delivery, equipping the 4 -5-year-old classrooms across all 10 new centres** with desks, chairs, mats, bookcases, fantasy play and reading corners, educational puzzles, Lego, blocks, toys, arts and crafts materials, outdoor play equipment, safety resources.

Planning for the next delivery is well underway, we are aiming to resource classrooms for children aged 3-4 years at these 10 centres by year end - providing safe, fun spaces to support quality early learning.

OUTDOOR PLAY



SLT continues to enable safe, fun outdoor play environments.

In 2026, SLT invested in new outdoor playground equipment - **swings, jungle gyms, sandpits, shaded areas at three ECD centres.**

In the last 18 months, the Trust has invested

USD33,000

in new and upgraded outdoor play infrastructure across 20 centres. And is planning to expand these enriching play spaces to the remaining centres within the next year.

IMPACT

These classroom and outdoor environments provide children with safe, stimulating spaces that support gross motor development, coordination, social interaction, creativity, all while learning through play.

ECD SPECIALIST TRAINER



MEET FRANK MAKWAKWA

Hands-on training and ongoing onsite support strengthens ECD centres from within. Our trainers work directly in classrooms to mentor practitioners, model effective teaching, and embed play-based, learning aligned with the National Curriculum Framework.



Early Childhood Development

SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE

SLT continues to strengthen the quality and sustainability of ECD centres through targeted infrastructure improvements.

- **The Nhlonhlori Daycare is the newest recipient of an additional double classroom being built**, generously funded by a Singita guest, enabling access to safe, dedicated learning spaces for young children.
- The **Xalumukani pre-school's newly opened double classroom** is fully operational, providing much-needed additional classroom capacity and improving the learning environment for both children and teaching practitioners.

For many under resourced rural ECD centres, inadequate infrastructure remains a significant barrier to delivering safe, quality early learning and meeting registration requirements to access Government subsidies. SLT has partnered with Wild Impact to invest in improved classroom infrastructure. A comprehensive infrastructure assessment has been completed to guide and prioritise investment to support all participating centres to comply with the Department of Basic Education's requirements.

IMPACT

Creating safer, interactive and fun learning environments, while supporting the centres to access government subsidies, strengthening the future sustainability of early childhood education services across the region.

FOSTERING CAREGIVER/ PARENTAL AWARENESS

SLT hosted UNICEF caregiver awareness sessions for 400 parents, strengthening the critical role families play in children's development. Since 2024, 1,920 parents have participated in these awareness sessions.

TRACKING CHILDRENS DEVELOPMENT - EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES MEASURES

Historically, child assessments were complex and required specialists.

Today, SLT uses nationally recognised, outcome-based assessment tools. SLT has built local regional assessment capacity, **having trained 11 local Shangaan/Xitsonga-speaking assessors** in partnership with DataDrive 2030. These SLT assessors now conduct individual child assessments locally across all 27 ECD centres SLT supports, a key part of supporting data-driven decision-making across the region.

Using the Early Learning Outcome Measure (ELOM) assessment, **SLT tracks progress of children aged 4-5 years old in five key areas:**



NUMERACY



GROSS MOTOR SKILLS



FINE MOTOR SKILLS



COGNITION & EXECUTIVE FUNCTION



LITERACY & LANGUAGE

In **February 2026, 448 children, aged 4-5 years, completed the ELOM assessment** across the 27 Early Childhood Development centres supported by SLT.

Results highlight encouraging foundations in language, literacy, and gross motor development, while identifying numeracy, fine motor, and cognitive development as key focus areas for targeted support.

These findings inform ECD practitioner training and classroom interventions, with a year-end endline assessment planned in October to measure ongoing progress.

IMPACT

ELOM enables SLT to measure child outcomes against national benchmarks of developmental progress, strengthen data-driven decision-making, and ensure support is targeted to improve school readiness and long-term learning outcomes.



“For many this would be a once-a-lifetime experience. For some this would become a chance to get into the life of conservation and to one day walk in the footsteps of many other careers, rangers, lodging staff and conservationists before them.”

– MORRIS NGWENYAMA



Environmental Education

BRINGING NATURE TO LIFE

Lessons in Conservation

The Lessons in Conservation (LiC) programme introduces young school learners to ecological principles and conservation through an engaging six-lesson curriculum designed to foster a lifelong connection between people and nature. Through interactive learning experiences hosted at Singita Sabi Sand during school holidays, children gain a deeper understanding of biodiversity, environmental stewardship, and the importance of conservation.

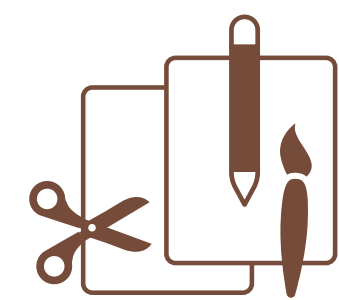
- 26 learners and school representatives completed the programme in the April school holidays, which was delivered by SLT Project Manager Morris Ngwenyama and supported by trained SLT and lodge staff.
- Learners gained practical exposure to conservation through game drives, lodge visits, and fun, interactive learning activities.
- **To date, 90 children have participated in the programme.**

This programme builds environmental awareness, fostering a connection to nature, and inspiring future conservation ambassadors and career pathways in conservation and tourism.

AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

TSHOKWANE BUSHSCHOOL FOR RANGER CHILDREN

The Tshokwane Rangers School provides a holiday education programme for the children of Kruger National Park field rangers, creating valuable learning opportunities in a unique conservation setting.



Since 2024, SLT has supported the school with

USD 10,225

TO PURCHASE THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES,
ARTS, CRAFTS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED
TO SUPPORT THE HOLIDAY PROGRAMME.

SCALING DIGITAL E-LEARNING AS THE FUTURE FOR RURAL EDUCATION

Good Work Foundation

The Trust has a long-standing commitment to digital literacy through a partnership with the Good Work Foundation, an independent NGO, which operates 6 world-class digital learning campuses in the region.

Since 2018, SLT has been a key co-funder of the Justicia Digital Learning Campus (JDLC), providing annual funding of

USD 85,000

TO SUPPORT THE CAMPUS'S OPERATIONAL COSTS.

Each year, the JDLC
reaches more than

1,000

SCHOOL-AGED LEARNERS
THROUGH ITS OPEN
LEARNING ACADEMY.

And approximately

558

YOUNG SCHOOL LEAVERS
THROUGH ITS BRIDGING ACADEMY,
equipping participants with the
digital and workplace skills needed
to access further education and
employment opportunities.



By equipping emerging entrepreneurs with vital skills and financial resources, the Hustle Economy Programme nurtures resilience within the informal economy, aligning with SLT’s mission to promote sustainable, self-reliant communities.



UNLOCKING RURAL TALENT

Hustle Economy

The Hustle Economy Programme, led by Wild Impact and supported by the Singita Lowveld Trust, addresses one of the region’s greatest challenges: youth unemployment and limited economic opportunities.

SLT PROVIDES ANNUAL FUNDING OF

USD 54,900

towards the delivery of the Hustle Economy Programme, supporting business development training, financial literacy education, mentorship, and access to seed funding and investment opportunities for emerging local entrepreneurs actively engaged in the informal sector trade.

In the last five years (since 2021), the programme has delivered significant impact:

818 ENTREPRENEURS

have participated across seven cohorts

96% OF PARTICIPANTS

earn above minimum wage following programme completion

Participating businesses collectively employ more than

200 ADDITIONAL PEOPLE

Cohort 8 commenced in May 2026 and includes **240 entrepreneurs from nine communities** across the Greater Kruger landscape.

The programme continues to demonstrate the potential of small enterprises engaging in the creative, informal sector economy that **drives a vibrant local rural economy**. SLT has committed to supporting the programme for a three-year period, strengthening local economic resilience and livelihood opportunities within the Greater Kruger region.



THE SINGITA PODCAST

Explore how food, culture and conservation come together at Singita in this Safari Conversations episode with Mia Neethling, Mbhali Khoza and Michael Matera.



FROM POTENTIAL TO PROFESSION

Singita Community Culinary School

The Singita Community Culinary School (SCCS) offers young people from neighbouring local villages the opportunity to become professional chefs with a full scholarship. This is an intensive year-long culinary course, followed by a six-month work internship. Singita proudly partners with the globally renowned Prue Leith Culinary Institute, a leading academic quality assurance and accreditation provider.

Graduates of the SCCS earn a highly acclaimed, internationally recognised City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery, complemented by WSET Level 1 Wine certification and essential Fire Safety and First Aid qualifications.

8
students

ARE ENROLLED IN THE 2026 COHORT
(6 FEMALES AND 2 MALES)

119 
SCCS graduates

SINCE OPENING IN 2007.

All 2025 graduates have successfully secured employment at partner lodges. These placements reflect the strong reputation of SCCS and increasing demand for its graduates across the hospitality sector.

GRADUATE IMPACT STORY



A special impact story from one of our proud SCCS Alumni students, Mbhali Khoza.

Mbhali enrolled at the Singita Community Culinary School (SCCS) in 2016 and graduated the following year. Her first role was in the staff canteen, where she managed daily operations and quickly proved her commitment. In 2018, she was promoted to Demi Chef de Partie, joining the kitchens at Singita Lebombo and Sweni Lodges. Her skills and confidence grew steadily, and in December 2023, she achieved a major milestone when she was promoted to Sous Chef. “This position feels like a dream come true,” she says. With her sights set on becoming a Head Chef at Singita Kruger National Park, Mbhali continues to build her career while leading with positivity and determination. For her, Singita is more than a workplace, it’s a family.

Thank you to the generosity of Singita guests and donors, the SCCS has achieved tremendous success since opening its doors in 2007.



HIGHLY SKILLED DOGS

These K9s (canines) are actively deployed, performing diverse duties including patrols, scenting, tracking, suspect apprehension, and detecting firearms and ammunition.



Tracker Academy

SLT supports tracker training scholarships and professional development opportunities, helping **prepare approximately 32 trackers annually** for careers in conservation, ecotourism and anti-poaching.

SLT PROVIDES

USD 40,000

annually, funding four full scholarships each year.

At a cost of **USD 10,000 per student**, each scholarship covers a comprehensive year-long, field-based training programme that combines practical tracking skills with personal and professional development.

Rhino Conservation

SLT remains committed to rhino conservation through its ongoing partnership with Care for Wild, supporting the rehabilitation and rewilding of 2 rhino orphans through annual sponsorship. Funding contributes towards veterinary care, nutrition, security, monitoring, habitat management, and long-term rehabilitation requirements.

During the first half of 2026, Singita guest experiences generated

USD 79,000

in support of Care for Wild, giving these donors a unique opportunity to engage with the sanctuary’s conservation work and meet the dedicated team caring for orphaned rhinos.

IMPACT

Through direct support for rhino rehabilitation and immersive guest experiences, SLT is helping secure a future for orphaned rhinos in the Greater Kruger landscape, a critical future source population for the region, while building ongoing awareness and support for rhino conservation.

Rhino dehorning

Rhino dehorning remains a critical component of SLT’s rhino conservation strategy, reducing the risk of poaching while supporting the long-term protection and recovery of rhino populations across the Greater Kruger landscape.

USD 10,000

in guest experience donations was received through rhino dehorning experiences during the first half of 2026.

USD 514,000

has been raised through SLT Rhino Dehorning Guest Experiences over the past four years.

Singita Sabi Sand – K9 Conservation Unit

The Singita Sabi Sand K9 Conservation Unit remains a critical priority to support the continued dedicated safeguarding of wildlife across the region.

2026 SLT support for this anti-poaching field ranger team includes the following surveillance and night vision monitoring equipment:

7 ADDITIONAL BUCKEYE CAMERAS

1 MONOCULAR THERMAL DEVICE

1 DJI MAVIC T4 DRONE

Guest donations and K9 guest experience income funded many of these purchases, significantly **strengthening surveillance capability, operational responsiveness, tracking effectiveness.**

Alongside ongoing support for canine teams, **SLT continues to invest in technology and equipment that enhance conservation monitoring and research outcomes** across the broader landscape.



THE SINGITA PODCAST

Listen to our latest episode of Safari Conversations, where Dr Nikki Balme and Lucy Stofberg explore how long-term research, ecotourism and science are helping secure a future for Africa's leopards – and why the Sabi Sand has become the world's best-studied leopard population.



Strengthening Wildlife Protection Through Technology and Rapid Response

SLT continues to support the layering in of innovative technology and rapid response capabilities for protected area authorities and anti-poaching teams to detect and respond to threats more effectively across the Greater Kruger landscape.

USD 38,000

contribution in early 2026 builds on SLT's investment in conservation technology over recent years, further strengthening technology-led approaches to wildlife protection, through enhanced ability to detect threats, improve response times and night vision monitoring and response capabilities.

DRONE TRAINING & LICENSING

- During the first half of 2026, SLT invested USD 3,200 in drone licensing for one team member, supporting environmental management and wildlife protection efforts.
- Since 2023, SLT has invested USD 16,500 in supporting the use of drones in the field.

Conservation Lounge

LEBOMBO LODGE

Singita introduced a new Conservation Lounge at Lebombo, one of Singita's lodges in the Kruger National Park. A dedicated space that brings the stories of the Singita Lowveld Trust to life. Through thoughtfully curated displays, it invites guests to explore the landscapes, wildlife and neighbouring communities that shape our work, fostering a deeper connection to nature and conservation.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS IN WILDLIFE RESEARCH, MONITORING AND PROTECTION

Endangered Wildlife Trust

In partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), SLT continues to support culture conservation across the greater Kruger landscape.



In March 2026, Singita Sabi Sand hosted a vulture capture and tagging operation with key staff, during which

16 WHITE-BACKED VULTURES

were captured, sampled, and ringed, with two birds fitted with GPS trackers.

The project contributes to **ongoing research and supports the early detection of wildlife poisoning events**, to enable effective rapid response and treatment of affected birds.

SLT supports EWT with annual operational funding towards the Birds of Prey and Carnivore Conservation Programme, **supporting ongoing research and long-term monitoring of populations across the region.**

Panthera

SLT supports Panthera's long standing flagship leopard research and monitoring programme in the Sabi Sand Nature Reserve. The Reserve is home to one of the world's most intensively studied and studied leopard populations, providing invaluable guidance in broader leopard conservation strategies. Through daily wildlife observations, **Singita field guides contribute valuable data on leopards and other carnivores, helping to build one of the largest long-term datasets of its kind.**

Annually SLT supports Panthera with operational funding for the monitoring of leopard in the Sabi Sand.



LISTEN ON SPOTIFY

Explore the future of lion conservation in this Safari Conversations episode, where Marnus Roodbol from the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Bernard Stiglingh, a Singita Field Guide, discuss the threats facing Africa's lions and the collaborative conservation efforts working to protect them.

This mid-year reflection on achievements, partnerships and teamwork showcases the power of collaboration and the deepening of our focus and impact across education, skills development for the tourism sector, support in promoting Africa's vibrant informal, creative economies and strengthened wildlife monitoring and protection.

This is made possible through the dedication of our teams, partners, and the generosity of our donors.

Together, we continue to protect South Africa's biodiversity and partner with neighbouring communities, ensuring a sustainable future for all.