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ANNUAL REPORT 2025



One planet
South Africa



NATURE CONNECT
Changing lives through nature.



HEI foundation

OVERVIEW 2025

YOUR SUPPORT IS DEEPLY VALUED BY OUR SCHOOL. IT HAS MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT—WHAT YOU TEACH ALIGNS BEAUTIFULLY WITH OUR PRESCRIBED CAPS . WE HAVE GAINED SO MUCH. THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES SHARED HAS RIPPLED OUTWARD, REACHING FAMILIES AND NEIGHBOURS TOO. TOGETHER, WE ARE PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE. TOGETHER, WE CAN SAVE OUR PLANET.

MRS FUTHI MBELE, PHUMELELANI PRIMARY SCHOOL.

2025 marks four years since One Planet SA was established—a milestone that affirms our staying power and opens doors to funding opportunities requiring at least three years of financial records. Timed perfectly with this achievement, we're proud to have received 5-star accreditation from the iZinga Assist Platform for NPOs—a significant endorsement of our credibility and commitment.

We're also thrilled to share that the Sustainable Schools Programme received the Gold Award in the Eco-Community Category at the National Eco-Logic Awards 2025. This honour belongs to every school, teacher, and partner organisation taking action for a more sustainable future.

Building on this momentum, One Planet SA was named Runner-Up in the Grassroots Leadership in Nature-Based Solutions Award, presented by the International Association for Impact Assessment SA and the Development Bank of SA.

Despite operating on a shoestring budget, we've truly 'moved mountains' in the 27 schools in KZN we support. I'm in awe of what we've achieved:

- 160+ in-school environmental lessons
- 680 hours of learning and engagement
- 238+ action projects—from gardens to water and energy-saving initiatives
- And thousands of ripple effects we cannot measure or may never know

We've been inspired by the initiative shown by schools leading their own actions, and by the creative brilliance displayed in the Eco-Systems Art Competition, held in recognition of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

While our core focus remains in-classroom and in-school, we've also seen the profound impact of 'Nature Connect' experiences. These excursions spark deep emotional connections and lasting care for the Earth. Going forward, we invite our supporters to help us expand these powerful opportunities within our vibrant school communities.

Bridget Ringdahl, Founder/ Programme Manager One Planet SA



WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS PROGRAMME?

“THE ONE PLANET TEAM PLAY A PRESTIGIOUS ROLE IN OUR LIVES AND COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. WE ARE NOW MORE INFORMED ON HOW TO TAKE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND TO BETTER OUR LIVES AS WELL AS OUR LEARNERS. ”

MRS DAKI, TEACHER, RIVERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL.



The Sustainable Schools programme, is helping to fill an urgent gap in engaging children in sustainability action projects and curriculum, in a fun and meaningful manner that in turn influence their families and wider communities to take sustainability issues seriously.

We work in partnership with Nature Connect to cultivate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) practices in a way that is locally relevant in South African schools. Sustainable Schools is a holistic approach to ESD supporting whole school participation in a continuous learning, action, reflection and adaptation process.

OVER 155 SCHOOLS IN FIVE PROVINCES ARE CURRENTLY INVOLVED, WITH OVER 322 ACTION PROJECTS INVOLVING 300 TEACHERS AND MORE THAN 1,8 MILLION EDUCATIONAL HOURS.



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FROM THE TEAM

MDU MCHUNU. SCHOOL FACILITATOR

The work I do is important because it goes far beyond delivering lessons, but it's about inspiring real change and building meaningful relationships. Every time I arrive at a school, I am met with eager learners who rejoice at my visits, and this reminds me why I wanted to pursue environmental education, was to inspire greatness. Being passionate, patient, and always ready to help makes the work not only easier but incredibly rewarding. Over time, I have built strong connections with both learners and teachers, which creates a supportive environment where environmental education can truly take root. Seeing learners engage confidently, ask questions, and take pride in their projects shows me that these visits are not just sessions, but moments that spark lifelong awareness. The joy, trust, and enthusiasm they show reminds me that nurturing environmental awareness at an early age is a powerful way to plant a seed of change that will grow for years to come.



JULIA INVERNIZZI – FACILITATOR & RESOURCE MANAGER

Our school interventions are fresh and inspiring, awakening curiosity and wonder not only in learners but in teachers too. I'm deeply passionate about this work and the lasting impact it has on individuals and their communities. It's this shared sense of purpose our unity in protecting one planet that makes me love what I do. I love working with a small, dynamic, and flexible team whose passion for the environment shines both inside and outside the classroom. I appreciate that our work isn't confined to one role instead, we're responsive to the needs and opportunities that arise. I get to wear many hats, from running workshops and helping with fundraisers to taking children on their very first visit to a place of natural beauty, like a forest or waterfall right on their doorstep. I especially enjoy collaborating with organisations such as SAEON (South African Environmental Observation Network) to create biodiverse gardens, these partnerships are wonderful exchanges of skills, ideas, and energy.





Eco-system Art



Edible Weeds

TAKING ACTION

Sustainable Schools KZN



Eco-brick bench builds



Bumper harvest!



miniSASS outing



Water audits



Biodiversity Garden



Water-saving tippy taps

2025 has been a very exciting and busy year so far with a strong focus on the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration which means getting learners out there into nature and doing something for it!
28 Schools and lots of environmental action!

SUCESSES OF 2025

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS: LEADING THE WAY IN NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND GRASSROOTS IMPACT

The Sustainable Schools Programme continued to shine nationally, earning **Gold** in the Community Category at the prestigious **National Enviropaedia Awards**.

The Programme was also honoured to receive the **Kudu Award for Innovation from SANPARKS**, for an outstanding contribution to conservation education - using technology, coaching, and learner-led projects to embed sustainability into classrooms across South Africa.

In addition, One Planet SA was recognised as runner-up in the Community and Grassroots category of the IAIA/Development Bank of South Africa Nature Champion Awards, and was honoured as one of only 40 NPOs in South Africa to achieve 5-Star Status on the iZinga Assist NPO verification platform.



Our schools also excelled in the **National EduPlant Competition**, with three KwaZulu-Natal Sustainable Schools named national winners:

- KwaNgubeni Primary School – 1st place in the Provincial Greening Competition, winning R6,000 for their outstanding permaculture food security and environmental education efforts.
- Nobanda Primary School – recognised as a National Centre of Excellence, winning R30,000 for mentoring neighbouring schools and inspiring community-wide change.
- Nkabini Primary School – awarded 2nd place nationally, winning R20,000 for their teamwork and commitment to building a thriving, sustainable food garden.

These achievements reflect the collective impact of the Sustainable Schools network and the dedication of learners, teachers, and communities in driving ecological restoration and resilience.



LOVING EARTH ON VALENTINE'S DAY AWARDS DAY 2024

"A SOUL-REVIVING EXPERIENCE THAT STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS NETWORK" TEACHER COMMENT

Over 70 teachers and learners from more than 20 Sustainable Schools gathered at Longmarket Girls School to celebrate their collective Green actions under the theme Love Earth this Valentines. The event showcased 180 action projects ranging from biodiversity gardens and pond eco-systems to recycling initiatives, river monitoring, water-saving technologies, solar energy installations, and permaculture food gardens. These efforts reflect the growing commitment of schools across KwaZulu-Natal to ecological restoration and sustainable living.



In keeping with the theme, all attendees received a copy of the Edible Weeds pocket guide and participated in a hands-on session identifying and tasting seasonal weeds. The day concluded with schools sharing their green journeys, inspiring one another with fresh ideas and renewed energy for 2025.



Recognition was given to schools excelling in these initiatives, with Nature Connect awarding over R48,000 in support. The Green Heart Awards, sponsored by Rondavel Soaps, honoured four outstanding teachers — Futhi Shezi (Nobanda Primary), Carmen Cawood (Longmarket Girls), Thobile Madondo (Nhlonhweni Primary), and Bronwen Aiston (The Birches Pre-primary) — for their dedication. In addition, Faithful to Nature presented an R800 voucher to Alice Surmon (Amanzimtoti Primary) as Most Dedicated Teacher.



SPOTLIGHT ON SPECIAL TEACHERS

CLIMATE AMBASSADOR: SIMANGALISO DLAMINI. SHEA O'CONNOR COMBINED SCHOOL

In July 2025, Simangaliso Dlamini from Shea O'Connor Combined School proudly represented South African schools at the Second COP29 Climate Change Summer Camp held in Shamakhi, Azerbaijan. As part of a global cohort of young educators, Simangaliso engaged in dynamic workshops and dialogue focused on climate education, equity, and action. Inspired by the camp's "snowball effect" vision, he committed to implementing new greening curriculum ideas and amplifying existing sustainability efforts within his school. Simangaliso also voiced a powerful call to action, noting that while climate change accelerates, many stakeholders — including communities, government, and private sector — are not responding fast enough. His participation highlighted the importance of youth leadership and international collaboration in driving meaningful change across education systems.



CULTIVATING CHANGE: STHEMBILE SHABALALA. KWANGUBENI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following KwaNgubeni Primary's top prize at the National EduPlant Competition, Mrs Shabalala continues to lead with energy and vision. Already preparing for 2026, she's expanding her school garden to include water-wise indigenous plants and herbs, and plans to sell seedlings as sustainable Valentine's gifts. She recently hosted an informal workshop with local gardeners and wellness groups, sharing cuttings, knowledge, and the Edible Weeds guide. Mrs Shabalala also mentored Sbogumbovu Primary, shared over 500 seedlings with them and a local old age home, and encouraged them to join the Sustainable Schools network. Her grassroots leadership is growing a movement of green action across communities.



HAPPY EARTH FEST 2025

The One Planet SA team proudly participated in the Happy Earth Forum at the Pietermaritzburg Botanical Gardens, joining a vibrant network of environmental organizations and engaging with over 1,500 learners from 30 schools. This year's theme, Waste and Recycling, came alive through interactive and creative activities designed to spark curiosity and action.

Highlights included:

- Recycling relay: learners competed in a fast-paced sorting challenge, reinforcing practical recycling skills.
- Waste timeline installation: a giant visual stretched between two trees, mapping how long everyday items take to break down — from two weeks to a million years, with plastics never truly disappearing. This striking display made the invisible impacts of waste tangible.
- Leaf impression art: learners created reusable wrapping paper using wax crayons and natural patterns, blending creativity with sustainability.

The event, led by the Happy Earth Forum, showcased the power of community, creativity, and connection to nature.



CARE ZIMBABWE: EDUCATION X CLIMATE RESEARCH PROJECT

This year, One Planet SA participated in the CARE Zimbabwe Education X Climate Research Project, conducted across six SADC countries including South Africa. The study examined how climate education is integrated into schools and whether adolescents are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills. Research in Pietermaritzburg revealed strong indigenous knowledge within communities but limited understanding among teachers and learners, hindered by outdated curricula, scarce resources, and cultural misconceptions. The findings highlight the urgent need for experiential, context-relevant teaching, stronger school-community-policy alignment, and comprehensive teacher training to ensure adolescents gain the climate literacy and skills essential for resilience.



Pond Eco-system



Edible Weeds

TAKING ACTION

Sustainable Schools KZN



Eco-brick bench/garden and nursery



Pumper harvest!



miniSASS outing

2025 has been a very exciting and busy year so far with a strong focus on the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration which means getting learners out there into nature and doing something for it.
28 Schools and lots of environmental action!



Water-saving tippy taps



Biodiversity survey

ECO-SYSTEMS ART COMPETITION



As part of our commitment to the UN Decade on Ecological Restoration, the Sustainable Schools Programme hosted an Eco-Systems Art Competition across KwaZulu-Natal. The initiative invited classes of learners to select an ecosystem relevant to their community and collaboratively create a collective artwork. Each learner contributed drawings of animals and plants on A4 paper, which together formed a vibrant ecosystem display.

The competition drew an extraordinary response, with 15 entries depicting diverse ecosystems including grasslands, wetlands, mistbelt forests, savannahs, and oceans. Local artists from Howick served as judges, reviewing submissions that were mounted, photographed, and projected for evaluation.

Entries were assessed against four criteria: Adherence to the brief; Creativity; Collaboration; Accuracy in depicting the ecosystem

Three schools were selected as winners:

- Bambanani Primary – Grassland
- Phumelelani Primary – Grassland/Wetland
- Muntuza Combined – Wetland

Each winning school received an ecosystem/pond garden valued at a minimum of R10,000. These gardens will serve as living outdoor classrooms, strengthening biodiversity education and embedding ecological restoration into everyday learning.





Eco-systems Art Winner 2025 – Bambanani Primary





Eco-Systems Art 2025



HIGHLIGHTS 2025

8654

**Learner
Interactions**

28 Schools supported to become more sustainable

18 River Projects

17 Tippy Taps Installed

27 Biodiversity Gardens

24 Vegetable Gardens

HIGHLIGHTS 2025

Support Visits to
Schools

158

Compost Heaps
Created

17

Clean Ups &
Recycling Projects

66

Invasive Clearing
Events

10

Eco-brick
Benches Built

7

Eco-System
Ponds Installed

5



Earth Day Celebration



Seedling beds

TAKING ACTION

Sustainable Schools KZN



Alien Plant Clearing



Earring Making



Sorting the Recycling station



Climate Change & Solar Cooking



Growing Vegetables



Get that water clean!

2025 has been a very exciting and busy year with a strong focus on the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration which means getting learners out there into nature and doing something for it.

NATURE CONNECT OUTINGS

"What we loved about our journey is that we saw a protected forest that was a protea forest!! We learned about so many trees, but the most loved was the 200 yr old cabbage tree that we hugged, it took four of us to get our arms around it! Thank you very much for the best journey we made with you." Banele Mlongeni.

Every year we try our best to get learners out into real wild and natural spaces. The biggest limitation is travel costs. That said, we managed to do five amazing outings in the incredible Dargle Misbelt Forest in the Midlands and one the Drakensberg, at the Cavern trails. We believe these experiences are essential to fostering the connection to nature required to translate taking action for our planet. The comments from the learners and teachers alike say it all. We need to do more of this, its just a question of funding.

"It was the best trip! We learned and saw so many new things like a cabbage tree that was 200 years old and so so tall. It was suprising to see a protea flower on a tree - that was incredible - wow! And did you know it was the first time for me to see baboons and forest buck and different fungi with my own eyes and hear the sounds of birds that sang in my ears ! Bridget and Julia thank you so much for teaching us about nature and biodiversity" Owami Dlamini

"We learned so much about nature and saw so many impressive things, The beauty of nature: the sounds of water, the smell and ancient trees like the cabbage tree. We want to thank you for taking us for a hike in the mountains, we really appreciate that." Thobani Sithole





SNAPSHOT OF SCHOOLS

Exceeding expectations: Bambanani Primary School, Bergville



“The indigenous garden is so valuable and beautiful for the entire school, even the community love it. It enhances and supports us a lot because some of our topics are based on plants”, Mrs Zikalala



On our last visit to Bambanani Primary, I was absolutely blown away by the transformation since our previous lesson. The learners hadn't just ticked off the tasks I left them—they had embraced sustainability with heart and imagination. A proud collection of 100 eco-bricks had been turned into a horse-shoe bench for the Grade Rs, giving the youngest learners a special space of their own. The indigenous garden we planted in Jan now carries a beautiful sign, “Bamabanani’s Bee, Butterfly Biodiversity Garden,” and the children had even cleared another stretch of sterile lawn to expand it further. Their vegetable garden was thriving again, freshly prepped and with a mini bank of seedlings, while a new compost heap showed their commitment to closing the loop. And in the simplest but most telling act of care, their tippy taps were kept full—proof that sustainable living had become part of their daily rhythm.



Bamabanani were also top WINNER with their spectacular Grassland for the Eco-Systems Art competition. Working together with the South African Env Observation Network (SAEON) we planted their prize, an authentic “Berg” specific grassland and pond expanding their biodiversity vision. We also took the Grd 7s on a meaningful and much enjoyed hike at The Cavern, a first time for many to actually get into the Berg, which they can see everyday from their school.



BEFORE



AFTER

SNAPSHOT OF SCHOOLS

Latest Trailblazer: Nkabini Primary, Bulwer



“It is always refreshing to have a person that is knowledgeable and that our learners relate too, our lessons are always fun and informative everytime. One Planet SA has made a huge difference in our school, in our Learners, teachers, and SMT members are so grateful. We are realising the difference in the performance of our learners, because of your practical aspect of your work” Mrs Sithole



Despite joining half way through 2025, Nkabini Primary has already demonstrated an impressive commitment to integrating sustainable education into everyday learning. Their enthusiasm was evident when they emerged as one of our 3 schools to a category in the highly competitive National EduPlant competition winning R20 000. This achievement reflects not only dedication, but also the strong leadership and passion of its teachers, who have embraced SS. With such momentum and a clear appetite for growth, Nkabini primary is on an exciting upward trajectory. They have the potential not only to strengthen their own sustainability initiatives such as permaculture garden, and waste & recycling station, but also becoming a leading example for other schools within the programme.



Mover and Shaker: Curry’s Post Primary

Led by pioneering IT teacher, Mondli Ngubane, Curry’s Post Primary was one of the fastest schools ever to register on the programme - a seamless process for such a tech-savvy educator. Within just a few weeks, they have set up tippy taps that are now in regular daily use, collectively saving an estimated 10,000 litres of water.

They have also reached out to community which supplied rich compost to rejuvenate their veg. With freshly composted and mulched beds, the garden is thriving once again, and the learners are now harvesting 80 spinach and cabbage plants — just in time for the festive season.



SNAPSHOT OF SCHOOLS

Fabulous 1st Year of Impact: Prestbury Primary School



“Working with Mdu has been such a blessing. Always just a message away, you listened, guided, and motivated not only me but the learners too. your encouragement and genuine interest made them feel valued. You’ve built a beautiful bond with them, and it shows. You have many fond fans here at Prestbury! The children light up when they know you’re visiting, a true reflection of the impact you’ve had.” Miss Pillay, Prestbury Primary

Prestbury Primary School is another dynamic new school started their first year strongly, quickly establishing themselves as one of the programme’s most promising schools, integrating sustainability into both curriculum and school culture. A standout achievement has been their eco-brick collection, with plans to transform the bricks into eco-stools—an inventive project reflecting resourcefulness and sustainable living. The school exceeded expectations by celebrating key environmental calendar days such as World Water Day, Earth Day, Arbor Week, and World Oceans Day with engaging, educational activities. Learners participated in hands-on experiences including classroom discussions, poster campaigns, clean-ups with Keep PMB Clean Action, env quizzes, and case studies incorporated into final exams.

Wonders with Waste: Muntuza Full Service

This year Muntuza Full Service School went all out with regard to tackling waste. They collected more than 470 eco-bricks and built the most fabulous Eco-bench planter saving 470 black bags of plastic from entering our rivers, oceans, landfills. The fact that we didnt have a Trashion show this year- didnt stop them either from having their own incredible show-stopper. Added to this the eco-club and Principal have got active in protecting their local wetland that borders on their school. They have written to their municipality urging for more support to stop the dumping. Added to this they were also one of the 3 Eco-Systems Art winners, their eco-system of choice was not surprisingly, a wetland!





FINANCIALS

This summary accounts for funding from Jan 2025 to Dec 2025 and has been verified by Framework Consultants. We have completed all our other requirements by SARS, CPIC and the Dept of Social Development as per NPO regulations in South Africa

One Planet SA NPC

(Registration Number 2021/821289/08)

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

Statement of Cash Flows

Figures in R

	Note	2025	2024
Cash flows (used in) / from operations			
Surplus for the year		123,136	65,295
Adjustments to reconcile surplus			
Adjustments for finance income		(61,432)	(73,734)
Adjustments for increase in trade accounts payable	1	-	-
Adjustments for provisions		(126,096)	25,127
Total adjustments to reconcile surplus		(187,527)	(48,607)
Net cash flows (used in) / from operations		(64,391)	16,688
Interest received		61,432	73,734
Net cash flows (used in) / from operating activities		(2,959)	90,422
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents		(2,959)	90,422
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year		798,338	707,917
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	4	795,379	798,339



Beach clean-ups



soil and decomposition experiments

TAKING ACTION

Sustainable Schools KZN



Mist Belt forest excursions



Solar cooking



We Love Wetlands!



Biodiversity Gardens



Secret Water



Wetland and river studies



learning plant pollination

TESTAMONIALS

Teachers say the Nicest Things

“Beyond specific projects, Mdu is known for his quality and infectious enthusiasm with a great ability to work collaboratively with others. He is reliable, self-driven, and takes initiative to identify and solve problems independently. His dedication and proactive approach have greatly benefited our school's environmental efforts.” Mr Dladla, Kwangubeni Primary

“We are very delighted at our school because of the environmental education that you have given support to our school, has helped us and the learners to have more environmental awareness. It has improved the academic performance in our school and our learners have developed critical thinking. It has also given us the personal growth especially us as educators as well as the learners, because now we are more equipped to do more community engagement.” Mrs Buthelezi, Khethindelenhle Primary

“Our school benefits greatly from SS. The hands-on, experimental learning has helped our Grade 7 learners become more confident, curious, and alert when working with scientific knowledge. We are proud to share that when we track our former learners at their various secondary schools, they continue to perform well in Natural Sciences. The strong foundation they receive through SS helps them achieve higher levels, even up to matric. SS makes a real difference in our learners' futures. Thank you so much.” Thobile Madondo, Nhlonhlweni Primary

“The SS lessons are so inspiring and vital in achieving our goals for the year. Julia and Bridget are so helpful in offering ideas, resources and activities to assist in achieving our goals throughout the year. Their assistance with the SEMP planning and implementation as well as uploading the photographic evidence on the SS website is invaluable. Their visit once a term is definitely a highlight and is always tailor made to our student's level and interests.” Angela McDowell, Danville Girls High School

“You have helped to re-energise our environmental portfolio and our belief that anything is possible. Your guidance has made us want to do things better.” Mr Mloni, Currys Post Primary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are extremely grateful to our funders: The HCI Foundation, The Solon Foundation and Nature Connect (Allan Gray). Without their support and belief in our efforts, none of this would be possible.

We would also like to thank all the wonderful schools we work with. You are rare and special and examples to all of South Africa about how important including our environment into the daily actions and teaching is vital to our long-term sustainability.



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