



**GWFF**

good work foundation

**REIMAGINING EDUCATION.  
RESTORING POSSIBILITY.**

# **2025 Impact Report.**

**Building pathways from rural learning  
to meaningful work.**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS GLOSSARY

<b>BLM</b> - Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
<b>BPO</b> - Business Process Outsourcing
<b>BYA</b> - Bridging Year Academy
<b>CAPS</b> - Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
<b>ESG</b> - Environmental, Social and Governance
<b>FGASA</b> - Field Guides Association of Southern Africa
<b>GWF</b> - Good Work Foundation
<b>ICDL</b> - International Certificate of Digital Literacy
<b>IT</b> - Information Technology
<b>KPIs</b> - Key Performance Indicators
<b>MEL</b> - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>NGOs</b> - Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NSFAS</b> - National Student Financial Aid Scheme
<b>OKR</b> - Objectives and Key Results
<b>OLA</b> - Open Learning Academy
<b>SANParks</b> - South African National Parks
<b>SDGs</b> - Sustainable Development Goals
<b>ToC</b> - Theory of Change
<b>TSP</b> - Teacher Support Programme
<b>TVET</b> - Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>VUI</b> - VillageUp Impact
<b>XR</b> - Extended Reality (VR/AR)
<b>Y.E.S.</b> - Youth Employment Service

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# “2025 was another impactful year for the team at GWF.”

*We continued to grow our Open Learning Academy programmes, extending access to more Grade 3 learners through Reading Circles, to additional Grade 8 and 9 learners through our Coding and Robotics for High School programme, and to new young learners in in the village of Dixie, the site of our proposed seventh campus, and at Care for Wild.*

*Our Bridging Year Academy continued supporting young rural South Africans as they transitioned from school into the workplace or further study. We also expanded our Hospitality Academy to meet the needs of local partners, while sustaining the strong performance of our IT, Conservation, and Facilitator Academies.*

*At the heart of this work are our facilitators, who continue to deliver these programmes with commitment and energy while adapting and learning alongside the changing needs of our learners and students.*

*Strengthening our Ecosystem of Learning and Working, we saw a high level of graduates moving on to further training and employment opportunities, tracking transition from skills development into employment, with an 82% placement into work or further study from our Career Academies (2025 alumni).*

*As an organisation, we advanced our digital transformation journey, migrating programmes and programme content onto Salesforce platforms that enable real-time impact measurement and reporting. One particularly meaningful milestone is that the young people building and supporting these cloud-based systems are graduates of GWF's own programmes.*

*In July 2025, we undertook a rigorous strategic planning process with our management team, resulting in clear strategic priorities for 2026 supported by defined objectives and key results across the organisation. This shared process strengthened collective ownership of our mission and direction. The strategy now lives within a custom-built Salesforce strategy application, further deepening our commitment to digital transformation.*

*Strategic partnerships were another highlight of the year. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SANParks, whose Vision 2040 aligns strongly with GWF's mission. This partnership creates opportunities to scale our work in rural communities alongside SANParks reserves across the country. We also initiated a promising partnership with the University of Johannesburg, working with its Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management to strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and learning systems.*

*It has been an exciting and rewarding year, and a privilege to work alongside such a committed team. Thank you to our partners for your continued support. This report reflects the impact we created together in 2025, and I look forward to building on this momentum in 2026 and beyond.*

Love,  
Kate Groch

# Why Good Work Foundation exists.

**South Africa's future depends on whether young people can access meaningful pathways into learning, work, and opportunity, yet for many rural communities, these opportunities remain out of reach.**



## WHY GWF EXISTS

**Good Work Foundation (GWF) is a non-profit organisation reimagining education in South Africa. Through a unique Ecosystem of Learning and Working, GWF provides rural communities with access to digital education, modern skills development, and pathways into meaningful work.**

Our mission is urgent. At the start of 2025, national internet penetration in South Africa stood at 78.9%. Yet this national figure masks a persistent divide in the quality and location of access. According to Statistics South Africa's 2025 General Household Survey, only 2.7% of rural households had fixed internet access at home, falling to 1.9% among rural households in Mpumalanga. Youth also face significant barriers to entering the labour market. Nationally, 58.7% of unemployed young people in the first quarter of 2025 had no previous work experience, reinforcing the cycle of exclusion that GWF is working to break.

Our work is rooted in the belief that where a child is born should not determine the size of their future. Across many rural communities, young people grow up disconnected from opportunity, technology, and the pathways that allow them to participate fully in the modern world. GWF exists to change that.

**We challenge how young people learn, what they learn, and who has access to that learning.**

We believe education should lead somewhere. It should build confidence, open doors, and connect young people to real opportunities within their communities and beyond. When a young person gains access to opportunity, the impact extends far beyond the individual into families, communities, and future generations. We create learning experiences that build confidence, curiosity, agency, and real-world skills so that young people are not excluded from the future, but equipped to shape it.

Across our campuses, we work to bring a sense of discovery and wonder back into the classroom, especially in communities where youth unemployment can soar above 60%. Technology plays an important role in this work, but it is not the centre of it. The centre is always the young person. Our work remains grounded in creativity, innovation, excellence, lifelong learning, nurturing, and fun.

## WHY GWF EXISTS

### Our vision

Imagine a world where every child and young adult, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographic location, has the skills and confidence to successfully navigate the ever-changing digital world, and take advantage of the opportunities it has to offer.

**“The future will not exclude us. In fact, we will be waiting for it when it arrives.”** Kate Groch, GWF CEO

### Our ambition towards 2030

By 2030, GWF aims to scale our impact both on and off campus, empowering tens of thousands of young South Africans to step confidently into a world we cannot yet fully imagine. Our ambition is to export the GWF model as a sustainable blueprint for rural education across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

Each cluster of Digital Learning Campuses is designed to be:

- Locally rooted and financially resilient
- 100% community-powered
- 75% women-led

**Our dream is to see rural South African communities flourishing in the 21st-century digital world.**

# The Ecosystem of Learning and Working.

**For more than a decade, GWF has pioneered an “Ecosystem of Learning and Working” in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga, one of South Africa’s largest informal rural economies. The model brings opportunity closer to young people who are often geographically and socially excluded from it.**

This ecosystem functions as a virtuous cycle where education leads to opportunity, and opportunity drives community growth. Through this model, GWF partners with young people on a long-term journey toward becoming confident, employable, and active participants in their communities and the wider economy.

This cycle is powered by three driving forces:

- **Education:** Digital-based curricula that equip learners with 21st-century skills.
- **Access:** Breaking down barriers to the economy through learning that leads directly to dignified, locally rooted employment.
- **Upliftment:** Delivering tangible social and economic mobility for individuals, families, and communities.

## THE ECOSYSTEM OF LEARNING AND WORKING

# The learning component: GWF serves as the educational heart of the ecosystem.



Through long-term learning journeys that begin in childhood and extend into young adulthood, GWF supports learners to build not only practical skills, but also confidence, curiosity, agency, and a sense of possibility about their futures.

At the centre of this approach is a belief that learning should feel engaging, relevant, and deeply human. Across our programmes, learners are exposed to digital tools, creative problem-solving, communication, collaboration, conservation education, entrepreneurship, and pathways into further learning and work.

Our model combines high-touch facilitation with high-tech learning experiences, creating environments where young people are encouraged to think critically, explore creatively, and participate actively in the world around them.

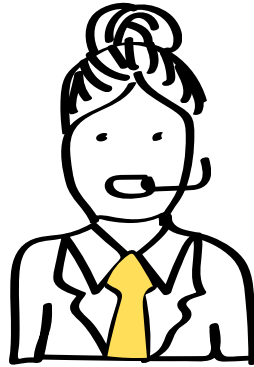
This learning journey begins in primary school at Grade 3 through the Open Learning Academy, continues through the Bridging Year Academy and Career Academies, and extends beyond graduation through mentorship, alumni support, work exposure, and employment pathways.

GWF's campuses are rooted within the communities they serve. Facilitators, managers, and leadership teams are drawn from the same rural communities as the learners themselves, creating powerful cycles of representation, aspiration, and local leadership.

While GWF is primarily an educational organisation, it is also a significant local employer and currently employs 151 people, 75% of whom are GWF alumni.

## THE ECOSYSTEM OF LEARNING AND WORKING

# The working component: VillageUp and the partner network.



For the ecosystem to work and keep families together, education must connect to real livelihoods. The “working component” bridges the gap between the classroom and the economy, specifically targeting sectors like the wildlife, hospitality and digital economies.

VillageUp is the structural engine of our working component. Established as a non-profit company, its mission is to connect rural potential to real-world opportunity. It helps move the talent developed through GWF into real economic opportunity in three ways:

- An economic connector that serves as a conduit connecting world-class rural education to sustainable, dignified employment.
- Holding equity in rural-aligned sustainable businesses.
- Acting as a strategic partner through entities such as VillageUp Impact (VUI).

As GWF’s home-grown social enterprise, VUI creates direct pathways to the digital economy and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector. Based at the Hazyview Digital Learning Campus, VUI has the capacity to host 100 digital agents, allowing them to thrive in global industries without leaving their rural homes.

Our partner network is fuelled by a network of purpose-driven businesses and sector specialists. Because five of the six GWF campuses border the Greater Kruger National Park and Sabi Sands Nature Reserve, many of these partnerships focus on the wildlife economy. These partners work closely with the GWF Hospitality and Conservation Academies to refine curricula, ensuring graduates possess the exact skills required by the local industry.

By bridging the gap between learning and livelihoods, the ecosystem ensures that education is not just an achievement, but the beginning of a viable, productive career.

## 2025 AT A GLANCE

# Learning reach.

# 13,023

OLA learners reached in 2025.

## 37%

Increase in number of OLA learners from 2024 to 2025.

## 40

Number of schools in GWF network.

## 29%

Increase in schools from 2024.

## 52

Teacher Support Programme workshops delivered.

## 439

Teachers attended TSP workshops.

# Pathways to work.

**324**

Bridging Year Academy students.

**182**

Students graduated with distinction.

**125**

Career Academy graduates.

**30**

Work opportunities created through VillageUp Impact.

**82%**

Absorption of Career Academy graduates into work or further study by April 2026.

# Organisational growth.

**151**

Full-time GWF employees.

**72%**

Of employees are female.

**75%**

Of employees are GWF alumni.

**11.8%**

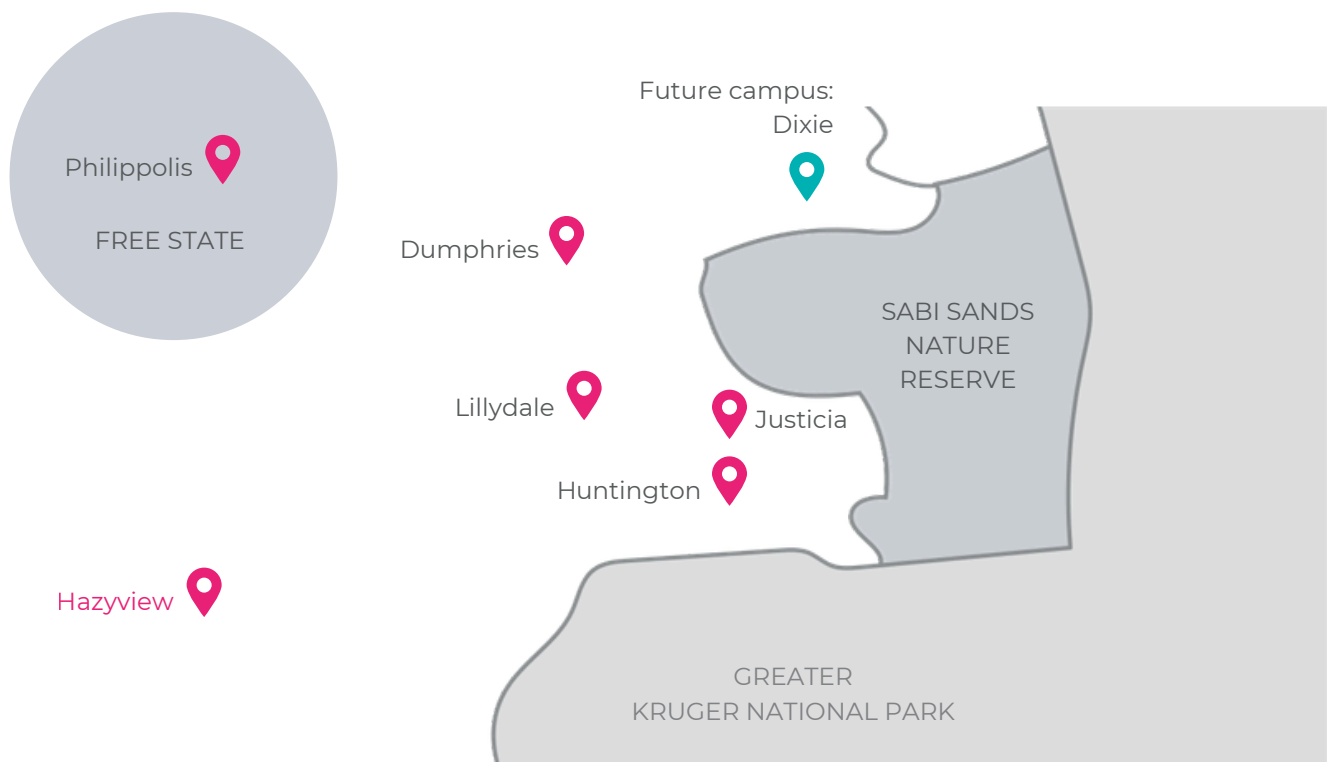
Growth in staff complement from 2024 to 2025.

# Where we work.

GWF traces its origins back to 2005 in Philippolis, Free State province. It began when a group of dedicated volunteers and community members established a preschool to address the urgent educational needs of the rural area. Witnessing the transformative power of this early intervention, educator Kate Groch and her founding team were inspired to establish the Good Work Foundation.

## Today, GWF operates six world-class Digital Learning Campuses.

While our roots remain in Philippolis, our reach has expanded significantly into Mpumalanga along the western border of the Greater Kruger National Park. Our Hazyview Digital Learning Campus serves as the hub for five campuses that bridge the opportunity gap for rural youth living on the edge of South Africa's iconic conservation areas.



## EXPANDING THE FOOTPRINT

**“GWF’s mission is to connect young South Africans with the skills they need to access opportunities for careers within their own rural spaces.”**

Kate Groch, GWF CEO

In Q4 2024, GWF began community consultations for the **Dixie Campus**. This will be our northernmost site to date. Already in 2025, GWF successfully delivered Open Learning Academy immersion programmes to learners from schools that will partner with the Dixie Campus.

With plans to officially launch the campus in January 2027, our efforts in 2026 will focus on deepening these school partnerships through ongoing OLA immersion programmes as well as the GWF Teacher Support Programme.

2025 also marked the pilot of a partnership with Care for Wild. This collaboration aims to develop a mobile education campus, bringing advanced learning opportunities to the communities surrounding the Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary in Barberton.



# THE CAMPUS MODEL



**Every GWF campus is locally managed and staffed, ensuring that we don't just work in communities, but with them.**

Each site serves three critical functions:

### **The Bridge**

Providing the digital skills and entrepreneurship tools necessary to transition from school into the 21st-century economy.

### **The Digital Hub**

Partnering with public-sector primary schools to provide world-class digital literacy training.

### **The Economic Engine**

Reducing the digital divide through VillageUp, our social enterprise that connects rural talent to global employment opportunities.

# Building the system for long-term impact: Roadmap to 2030.

## Digital transformation, MEL and SDG alignment

2025 marked 13 years of GWF delivering access to world-class learning in the remote villages of rural Mpumalanga. From its humble beginnings in a dusty banana shed in Hazyview, reaching just a handful of learners, GWF has grown into a network of Digital Learning Campuses serving rural communities across Mpumalanga and the Free State.

Over time, this growth has been guided not only by expansion, but by the ongoing refinement of GWF's educational model and long-term vision.

In 2023, GWF developed its Roadmap to 2030, setting out a strategic vision for the next phase of the organisation's growth and impact. While 2024 was focused on consolidating and refining this direction, 2025 marked a significant year of strategic alignment and organisational planning.

A major milestone during the year was the completion of a detailed organisational strategy process, through which GWF adopted the Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) framework. This process helped align Strategic Focus Areas across the organisation around a shared 2026 vision, strengthening accountability, clarity, and collective direction.

# At the centre of the Roadmap to 2030 remain GWF's two core learning journeys: the Open Learning Academy and the Bridging Year Academy. These programmes continue to form the foundation of GWF's long-term approach to learning, youth development, and pathways into opportunity.

Alongside these flagship programmes, GWF continues to strengthen and refine its Career Academies - Hospitality, Facilitator, Conservation, and IT - ensuring that learners are equipped with skills that are relevant to both local industries and a rapidly changing world. The Facilitator Academy and Teacher Support Programme continue to underpin this strategy by strengthening teaching quality, leadership development, and long-term organisational capacity across the ecosystem.

Over the past several years, GWF has invested deeply in digital transformation. This is changing how the organisation learns, operates, measures impact, and responds to change.

## **GWF has invested deeply in digital transformation.**

While many organisations still rely on fragmented reporting systems and retrospective data collection, GWF has invested in building an integrated digital ecosystem that connects programmes, operations, strategy, and impact measurement across the organisation.

Beginning in 2023, and continuing through 2024 and 2025, GWF engaged in a rigorous multi-phase process with Paragon Impact to align organisational outcomes with recognised international standards, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through a comprehensive materiality assessment and the Paragon +Grading Tool, GWF benchmarked its social performance and achieved an "A" grading in key areas including Quality Education and Decent Work.

GWF's work aligns most directly with the SDGs focused on quality education, decent work, reduced inequalities, and sustainable communities.

The Paragon +Impact process helped GWF test this alignment more rigorously, understand where its evidence is strongest, identify where reporting can improve, and strengthen the organisation's approach to measuring impact over time.

# SUSTAINABILITY, GOVERNANCE AND SDG ALIGNMENT

GWF has worked with Paragon Impact since 2023 to strengthen how the organisation understands, measures, and communicates its contribution to the United Nations SDGs.

The first SDG assessment was completed in 2023, followed by a second assessment in 2025. In consultation with Paragon Impact, GWF has agreed that a full SDG assessment will now take place every three years, with interim progress reports prepared in the years between full assessments. The next full assessment will be conducted in 2028, based on data and information from 2025 to 2027.

+ Impact Structure

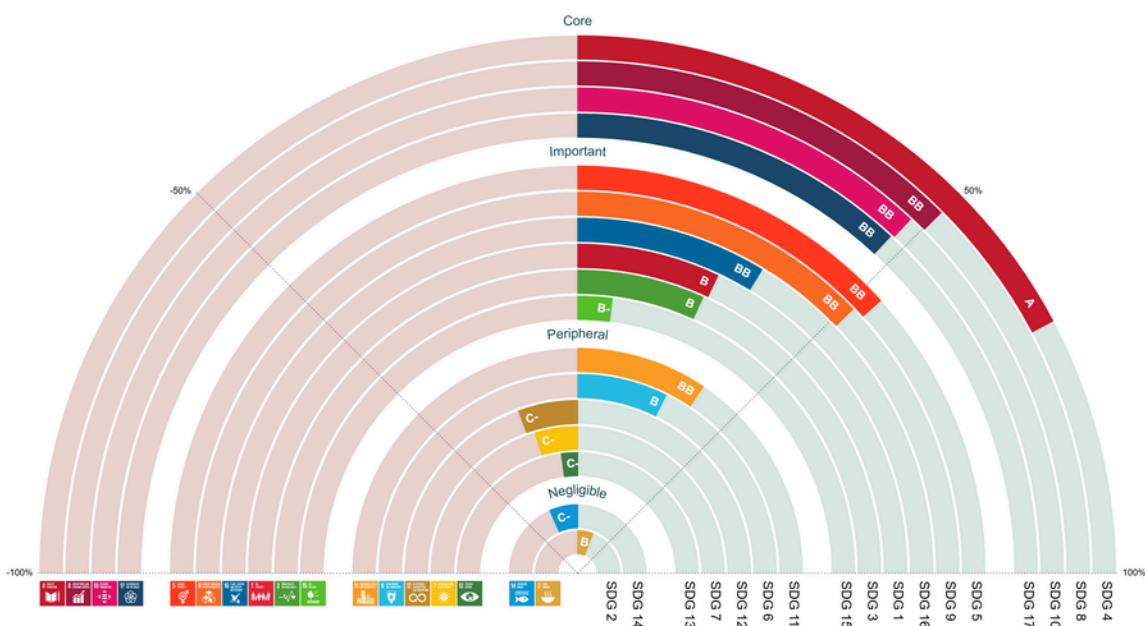


Figure 1: GWF's Impact Rainbow - 2025 Paragon +Impact assessment output

**The 2025 interim report recognises GWF's shift from strong programme delivery towards a more integrated system of impact. It highlights the organisation's strengthened data and measurement systems, expanding partnerships, and growing ability to connect learning to long-term outcomes at scale.**

## SUSTAINABILITY, GOVERNANCE AND SDG ALIGNMENT

The assessment shows that GWF's impact is anchored most strongly in four core Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities, and Partnerships for the Goals. These areas reflect GWF's central mission to bridge the educational and technological divide between rural and urban South Africa, while expanding access to skills, opportunity, and economic participation.

The assessment also shows GWF's contribution to a wider set of impact areas, including: Life on Land; Industry; Innovation and Infrastructure; Gender Equality; Good Health and Well-being; No Poverty; and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

This reflects the interconnected nature of GWF's work: when young people gain access to learning, technology, confidence, and employment pathways, the impact extends into families, communities, institutions, and the environments around them.

The 2025 interim report also notes progress in areas such as renewable energy, responsible resource use, and waste management. These areas have moved from previously negative positions to net positive contributions, reflecting GWF's growing operational maturity and commitment to more sustainable ways of working.

**The Paragon +Impact process gives GWF an external lens through which to assess its work, strengthen evidence, and communicate impact more clearly. It helps ensure that the organisation's impact is not only described through stories and numbers, but also understood within a broader framework of accountability, sustainability, and long-term learning.**

\*The Paragon Impact Interim Report based on GWF's 2025 operations is available on request.

## MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

This work now provides an important foundation for GWF's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning approach. It ensures that the organisation's impact is not only described through stories and numbers, but connected to a broader framework for accountability, learning, and long-term change.

Building on this foundation, GWF developed a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework aligned directly to the organisation's Theory of Change. This work is shifting impact reporting from retrospective activity tracking into a live system for learning, accountability, and decision-making.

By anchoring every metric to the organisation's mission and long-term outcomes, GWF is now able to track progress across the full learning journey - from inputs and activities through to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact.

At the centre of this transformation is the development of an integrated **Salesforce ecosystem** that supports real-time programme tracking, learner insights, operational coordination, strategic planning, and impact reporting across the organisation.

In 2025, GWF established an **in-house Data Desk** consisting of five junior data analysts, all graduates of GWF programmes who went on to study data analytics through the GWF/CAPACITI partnership.

These young professionals now help build, manage, and maintain the systems that support organisational learning and decision-making across GWF, including its Salesforce ecosystem.

**This is the ecosystem in practice. Young people who once entered GWF as students are now helping build the systems that shape the organisation's future. As GWF continues to grow, digital transformation will remain central to strengthening organisational resilience, improving programme responsiveness, deepening accountability, and ensuring that decision-making is informed by real-time insight rather than retrospective reporting.**

## LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

**The success of GWF is rooted in the strong culture, values, and sense of purpose that underpin everything we do. As the organisation continues to grow, protecting and intentionally developing this culture is not optional - it is essential to the long-term sustainability of both the organisation and the communities it serves.**

Over the past decade, GWF has expanded from a team of six people to a network of **more than 150 staff** across multiple campuses and programmes. Much of this growth has been driven by young leaders emerging from within the organisation itself - many of whom come from the same rural communities as the learners they now support and lead.

Leadership development is not viewed simply as professional advancement. It is part of a much broader commitment to building confident, values-driven leaders who are able to contribute meaningfully to their communities, workplaces and South Africa's future. In response to this need, the **GWF Leadership Programme** was launched as an internal initiative focused on strengthening leadership capacity, deepening values alignment, and supporting the next generation of organisational leadership.

Cohort One included 10 participants from across the GWF campuses using combined online learning, in-person engagements, and self-paced learning through the Kaya Connect platform. The curriculum explored GWF's leadership philosophy and values alongside frameworks such as the Golden Circle, Social Leadership, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and the Narrative, Engagement, Technology (NET) Leadership Model.

The programme creates space for reflection, peer learning, confidence-building, and a deeper understanding of values-based leadership in practice, and the impact of it is already visible. Several participants have stepped into new opportunities and leadership pathways within GWF, while others have progressed into opportunities beyond the organisation.

## LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

**As GWF looks towards the future, developing ethical, grounded, and capable young leaders will remain central to the organisation's long-term vision not only for the sustainability of GWF itself, but for the broader future of leadership in South Africa.**



*GWF's 2025 Leadership Programme Cohort*

## ALUMNI CONNECT

Graduation is not viewed as the end of a learning journey, but as the beginning of a lifelong relationship with opportunity, community, and growth. Over the years, thousands of young people have moved through GWF's programmes, carrying their learning into workplaces, universities, businesses, conservation spaces, classrooms, and communities across South Africa. As this alumni network has grown, so too has the importance of creating intentional systems of continued support, connection, and belonging.

In 2025, this commitment was formalised through the launch of **Alumni Connect**.

Alumni Connect is more than a database or communication platform. It is a living extension of the GWF ecosystem, helping graduates stay connected to GWF, to one another, and to opportunities beyond graduation.

At its core, Alumni Connect recognises that the transition from learning into adulthood, work, entrepreneurship, or further study is often complex, particularly for young people navigating systems and opportunities that previous generations in their families may never have accessed.

The platform is therefore structured around three interconnected pathways of support:

- 1. Entrepreneurship and the hustle economy:** Many GWF alumni are building livelihoods in informal, entrepreneurial, and self-created economies. Alumni Connect supports these journeys through financial literacy, entrepreneurial development, peer learning, exposure to partner networks, and opportunities to strengthen side ventures and small businesses. This recognises entrepreneurship not only as economic activity, but as creativity, resilience, agency, and community participation in action.
- 2. University and further study:** For many young people, accessing university or tertiary education is only the beginning of the challenge. Alumni Connect supports graduates through guidance on academic pathways, applications, funding opportunities, registration processes, and ongoing navigation of higher education systems. This support helps students navigate the transition into tertiary education with greater confidence and stability.
- 3. Employment connect:** Alumni Connect also supports the transition into meaningful work through employer engagement, placement tracking, mentorship, work readiness support, and connection to opportunities across GWF's wider ecosystem and partner network. This pathway allows GWF to remain connected to graduates as they move into workplaces and industries, strengthening long-term learning about career pathways, barriers, and opportunities within the broader ecosystem.

Together, these processes ensure that GWF graduates continue to have access to guidance, relationships, opportunity, and community beyond graduation.

More broadly, **Alumni Connect** reflects GWF's long-term belief that meaningful transformation does not happen through isolated interventions, but through sustained relationships, networks of support, and ecosystems that continue to grow alongside the young people they serve.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



GWF's work is rooted in relationships. Across campuses, schools, families, local leaders, employers, partners, and surrounding communities, community engagement is central to how the ecosystem works. GWF does not enter communities as an outside provider delivering isolated programmes. The organisation builds long-term relationships with the people and institutions that shape each learner's world.

This includes ongoing engagement with school principals, teachers, parents, caregivers, community stakeholders, local employers, conservation partners, and young people themselves. These relationships help ensure that programmes remain relevant, trusted, and responsive to the realities of each community.

**Community engagement also strengthens accountability. It creates space for feedback, shared learning, and local ownership. It helps GWF understand what is changing on the ground, where learners and families need support, and how the organisation can continue adapting without losing its values or purpose.**

In rural contexts, trust is built over time. GWF's long-standing presence across its campuses allows the organisation to work not only with individual learners, but also with the broader community systems around them.

This is what makes the ecosystem durable. It is not only a set of programmes. It is a network of relationships built over years.

## PARTNERING WITH GREENLIGHT MOVEMENT

**The Greenlight Movement** supports GWF's commitment to understanding the wider realities of the young people, families, and communities connected to its campuses.

While GWF's core work focuses on learning and pathways into opportunity, the organisation also recognises that education does not happen in isolation. A young person's ability to learn, grow, and participate in society and the economy, is shaped by the conditions around them - at home, at school, and within the broader community.

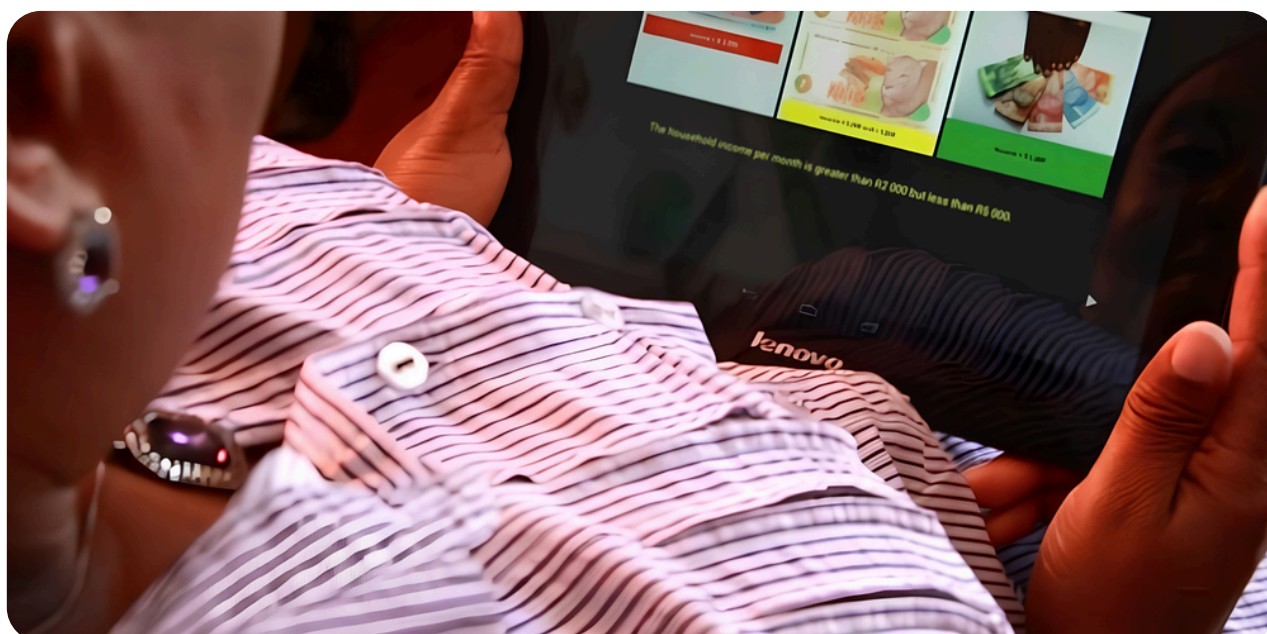
The Greenlight Movement provides a way to engage more deeply with these realities. It helps surface areas of strength, vulnerability, and need within households and communities, creating a more holistic picture of the barriers and opportunities that shape people's lives.

This kind of insight matters because GWF's work is relational and long-term. By better understanding the lived context of learners and families, the organisation can respond with greater care, relevance, and humility.

The Greenlight Movement therefore strengthens the ecosystem by helping GWF see beyond programme participation alone and remain attentive to the wider conditions that influence learning, well-being, agency, and opportunity.

The Greenlight Movement methodology includes a visual, self-evaluation survey that empowers households to diagnose their own socio-economic status. The methodology shifts the participant from a "data point" to a "diagnostician" by measuring 50 distinct indicators across these six dimensions:

1. **Income:** Financial stability and consistent revenue streams.
2. **Health:** Access to medical care and nutritional well-being.
3. **Housing:** Infrastructure, security, and the stability of the living environment.
4. **Education:** Continuous learning and skill acquisition.
5. **Organisation:** Personal planning and structure.
6. **Self-awareness:** Confidence, goal setting, and internal motivation.

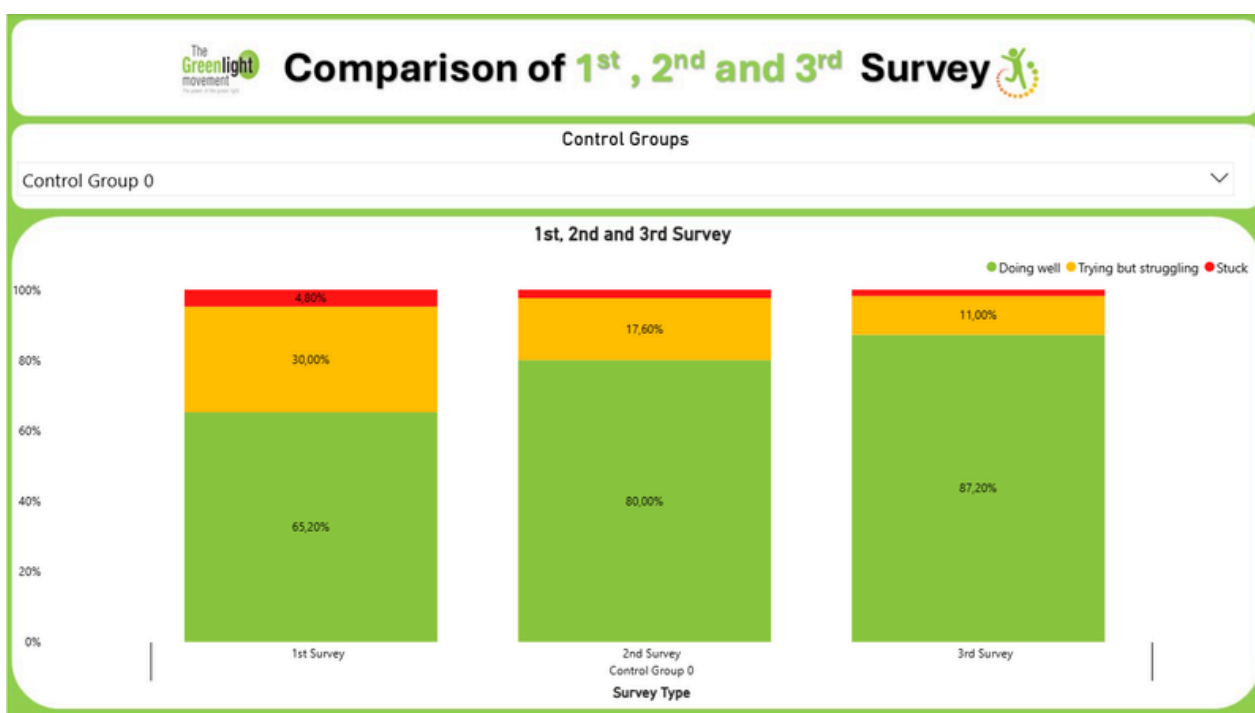


## PARTNERING WITH GREENLIGHT MOVEMENT

**By utilising a schedule of three surveys, a base of evidence is established that demonstrates how stable employment and structured support correlate with poverty reduction.**

**The data reveals a rapid acceleration in participant outcomes. During the first 10 months of the programme, we observed a 15.8% jump in indicators categorised as “Doing Well”.**

**This was followed by a secondary growth phase of 7.2%. The data suggests that once the initial barrier to entry - being employment - is bridged, the momentum of dignity carries over into the participant's personal life, health, and family management with compounding efficiency.**



Perhaps the most compelling metric is the significant reduction in indicators marked as “Struggling” (Yellow). At the baseline, 30% of indicators fell into the "Struggling" zone. By the end of the study, that figure dropped to 11%. This 20-percentage point shift proves that our participants are not merely making marginal adjustments but are successfully migrating into established, sustainable independence.

### Multidimensional growth

The transformation is most evident when analysing the movement within the six core dimensions of the Greenlight survey. The data compares the baseline “Doing Well” percentage against the final survey results, highlighting the comprehensive nature of the impact.

## INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY MEDIA

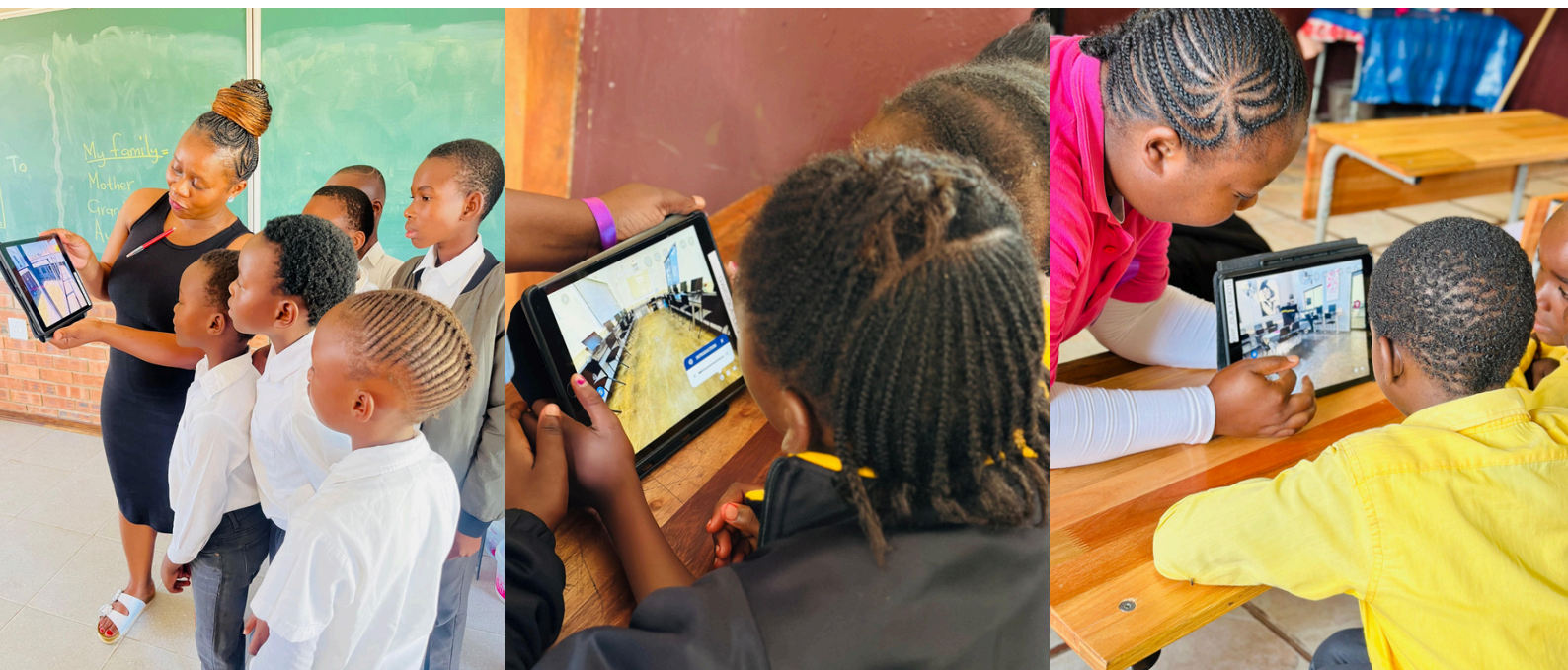
2025 also saw continued growth in innovation and community-based learning across the GWF ecosystem.

**Innovation is not approached as technology for technology's sake. Instead, digital tools and emerging technologies are used intentionally to deepen access, strengthen learning experiences, build confidence, and connect rural communities more meaningfully to the wider world.**

Throughout the year, GWF continued exploring how immersive technologies, AI, and community-led media platforms can expand both learning and opportunity within rural contexts.

Using EON Reality technology, Grade 3 learners were able to explore GWF campuses virtually from their own classrooms before arriving physically on campus the following year. These immersive experiences helped familiarise learners with digital learning environments, reducing anxiety and building excitement and confidence ahead of their transition into Grade 4 OLA programmes.

At the other end of the learning journey, BYA graduates participated in a pilot project using AI-driven avatars for interview preparation. Through simulated workplace scenarios and real-time feedback, students were able to practise communication, critical thinking, and interview skills in a supportive environment designed to increase confidence and work readiness.



## INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNITY MEDIA

Alongside these technology-driven innovations, 2025 also marked an important milestone in community storytelling and local media through the continued growth of **BlueHazy FM**.

What began as an initiative started in a GWF graduate's home has evolved into a fully operational community radio platform rooted within the GWF ecosystem. BlueHazy FM creates space for local voices, youth expression, educational content; and community connection, while also providing practical opportunities for graduates interested in media, communication, and broadcasting.

The station is not separate from the learning ecosystem; it actively strengthens it. In 2025, BlueHazy FM supported literacy development, matric preparation, conservation awareness, entrepreneurship, and career exposure through integrated educational broadcasting and community engagement.



Programmes integrated into BlueHazy FM during the year included:

- OLA Reading Programme broadcasts
- Career Academy interviews and learning content
- BYA entrepreneurship interviews and business pitches

Together, these initiatives reflect GWF's broader belief that innovation, creativity, technology, and storytelling all have an important role to play in building confident, connected, future-ready rural communities.

# Programme Impact.

**At the heart of GWF's impact are the learning journeys that support young people from early literacy through to livelihoods, employment and leadership.**

We have designed a transformative educational model that extends beyond traditional boundaries. Our programmes aim to instil in our students a profound belief in their ability to shape their own futures. Personal development is a fundamental aspect of our various curricula, paving the way for our students to navigate life with a greater sense of confidence.

# Open Learning Academy.

The Open Learning Academy (OLA) is GWF's flagship learning journey for children and young people across rural Mpumalanga and the Free State.

Designed for learners from Grade 3 to Grade 9, OLA reimagines what learning can look and feel like for young people growing up in communities that are geographically excluded from access to technology, opportunity, and digital education. At the heart of OLA is a belief that learning should spark curiosity, confidence, creativity, and possibility.

Through immersive, wonder-filled learning experiences, learners are introduced to digital technology, coding and robotics, conservation education, literacy, numeracy, creative expression, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving from an early age. For many learners, OLA provides their very first experience of using a computer, engaging with digital tools, or stepping into an environment intentionally designed to make learning exciting, joyful, and relevant to the world around them.

OLA is not designed simply to improve academic outcomes. It is designed to help young people develop agency, imagination, adaptability, and belief in their own potential. Across every campus and programme stream, OLA works to nurture young people who are curious about the world, confident in their ability to participate in it, and equipped to navigate a rapidly changing future. By combining high-touch facilitation with high-tech learning experiences, OLA creates environments where children are encouraged not only to learn, but to explore, question, experiment, create, and dream.

**At scale, OLA represents one of the most ambitious rural digital learning initiatives of its kind in South Africa that connects thousands of learners each year to pathways of learning, opportunity, and long-term participation in the modern economy.**

## 2025 REACH AND GROWTH

**40**

Public schools in the OLA network, offering wonder-filled learning experiences that spark curiosity, confidence and creativity in 2025.

**13,023**

Open Learning Academy students supported through both in-school and on-campus interventions in 2025.



**The following streams form the baseline of the OLA curriculum:**

- **Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Digital Skills**
- **Coding and Robotics**
- **Conservation**
- **Creative Arts**
- **Citizenship**

## GRADE 3 READING CIRCLES

In 2025, **Reading Circles** were rolled out across all of GWF's partner schools, introducing thousands of young learners to joyful, relationship-based reading experiences from an early age. Reading Circles are not only about literacy development. They are about building confidence, curiosity, communication, and a positive emotional relationship with learning itself.

These sessions create opportunities to speak, imagine, ask questions, listen actively, and participate in storytelling in ways that traditional classroom environments do not always allow. Important moments of human connection between facilitators and learners are created, helping children feel seen, encouraged, and supported as they transition into more formal digital learning journeys.

Each week, OLA facilitators and facilitator interns visited schools to spend dedicated time reading with Grade 3 learners, creating spaces where stories, imagination, language, and connection could come alive together.

These Grade 3 learners also participated in immersive virtual campus tours using EON Reality technology. Through these experiences, learners were able to explore GWF campuses digitally from within their own classrooms before arriving physically in Grade 4. For many children, this was their first experience of immersive technology and digital exploration. Beyond introducing learners to GWF spaces, the virtual tours helped build excitement, familiarity, and confidence ahead of their transition into the Grade 4 OLA programme.



**2,168**

Grade 3s participated in reading circles

## GRADE 4 FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

**2,341**

Grade 4 learners on GWF campuses every week

Grade 4 marks a major transition point within the OLA journey. Each week, learners travel to one of the GWF Digital Learning Campuses, where they participate in immersive learning experiences focused on literacy, numeracy, digital skills, creativity, and problem-solving.

For some learners, this is their very first interaction with a computer, tablet, or digital learning environment. It is often also their first experience of a learning space intentionally designed to feel exploratory and engaging. This stage is especially important because it coincides with the transition from mother-tongue instruction to English instruction within the South African school system. Across the country, many learners struggle to navigate this shift successfully, often experiencing a significant decline in comprehension, confidence, and academic performance during this period - a challenge widely referred to as the “Grade 4 slump”.

OLA supports learners through this critical transition by combining literacy and numeracy reinforcement with interactive digital learning experiences that help build confidence, comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement. Rather than positioning technology as an “add-on”, digital tools are integrated directly into the learning experience through carefully selected applications and activities aligned to curriculum outcomes and cognitive development. Beyond academic support, the Grade 4 programme also works to nurture curiosity, confidence, communication, collaboration, and a sense of excitement about learning itself.

In 2025, GWF piloted a Grade 4 end-of-year assessment process as part of its growing focus on long-term learning measurement and evidence-based programme refinement. This pilot was designed not simply to measure learner performance, but also to better understand learner engagement, classroom support needs, assessment delivery processes, and foundational literacy and numeracy development within the rural learning context.

Insights gathered through the pilot are already helping strengthen GWF’s future assessment approach, contributing to the development of more consistent, scalable, and digitally enabled learner measurement systems across the OLA network.

## GRADE 5 AND 6 IMMERSIONS

Grade 5 and 6 learners participated in two major sets of immersive experiences during 2025, designed to deepen curiosity, strengthen experiential learning, and expose learners to both environmental stewardship and conservation-relevant technological skills. These immersions form an important part of the OLA learning journey, creating opportunities for learners to engage more deeply with the world around them through hands-on, highly interactive experiences.

**2,598**

Grade 5 learners participated in immersions in 2025.

**2,595**

Grade 6 learners participated in immersions in 2025.



### 1. Coaching Conservation Rapid Awareness Programme (RAP)

Through the **Coaching Conservation RAP immersions**, learners explored key environmental and conservation themes using sport, storytelling, movement, discussion, and play-based learning approaches.

The Rhino RAP immersion introduced learners to rhino conservation and the realities of the rhino poaching crisis, helping learners better understand both the ecological and human impact of wildlife protection. The Vulture RAP immersion introduced learners to the ecological importance of vultures and the vital role they play within healthy ecosystems as natural “cleaners” of the environment.

These immersions are not only about environmental knowledge. They are designed to also nurture empathy, responsibility, curiosity, teamwork, and a deeper sense of connection between young people and the natural environments surrounding their communities.

For most of these learners who live adjacent to conservation areas, these experiences help build awareness of both environmental responsibility and future pathways into conservation-related careers and stewardship.

## GRADE 5 AND 6 IMMERSIONS

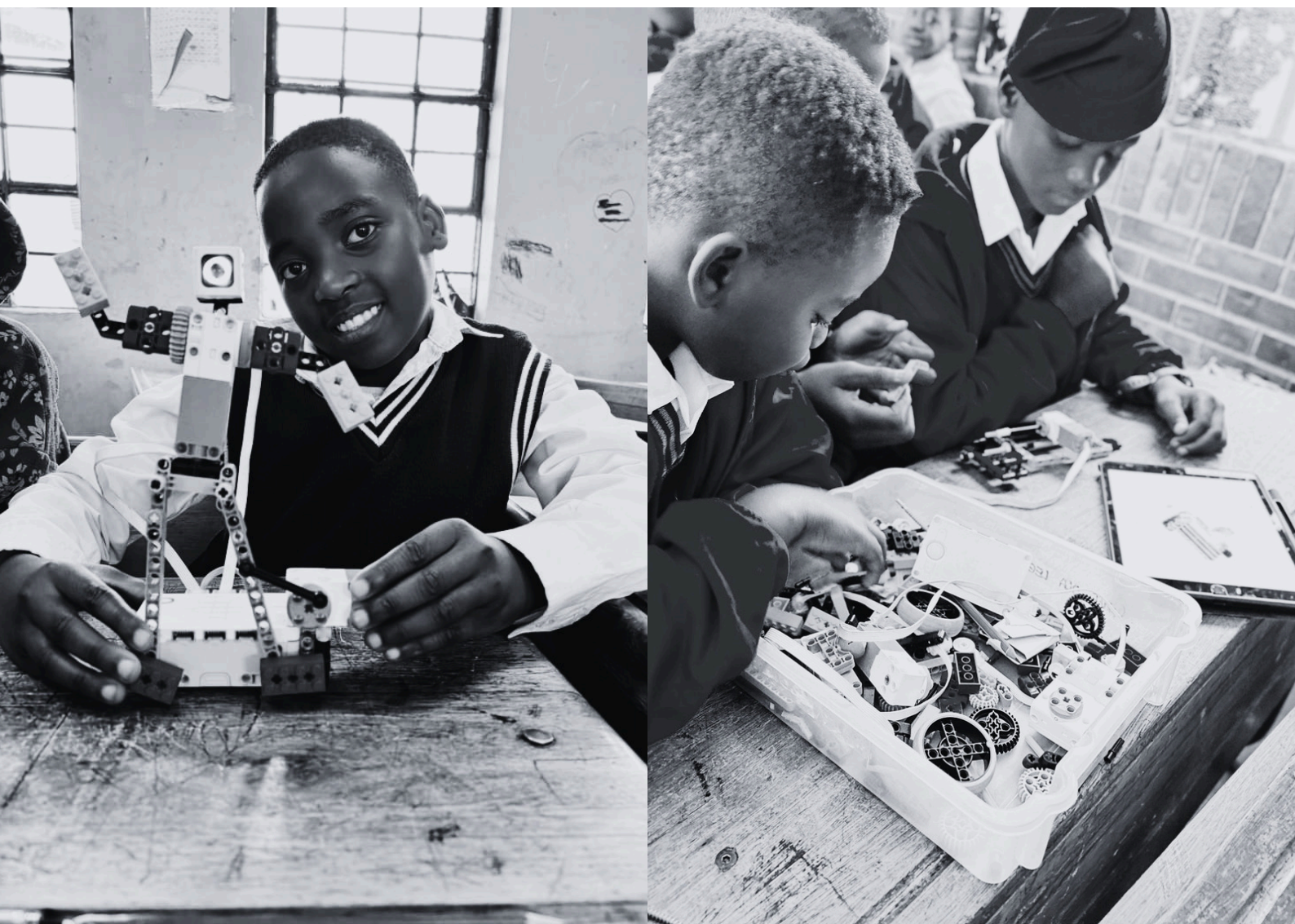
### 2. Lego Coding & Robotics Immersions

The **Lego Coding and Robotics immersions** introduced learners to coding, robotics, engineering thinking, and collaborative problem-solving through playful, hands-on learning experiences using Lego Spike kits. During the immersion, learners worked together to design, build, and programme functioning robots, strengthening their creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and computational reasoning skills through highly interactive learning challenges.

Using the Lego Spike kits, learners were introduced to core coding concepts, sequencing, problem-solving, logic, and engineering principles in ways that felt accessible, exciting, and engaging.

For most of the participating learners, this was a completely new experience. More than 50% of participating learners had never interacted with Lego before, let alone robotics technology or coding-based learning environments.

The immersion generated exceptionally positive feedback from learners, many of whom reported increased confidence in coding, robotics, technology, and problem-solving. Beyond technical skills development, the immersion helps learners begin seeing themselves as capable participants in a future increasingly shaped by technology, innovation, and digital thinking.



## GRADE 8 AND 9 CODING AND ROBOTICS

# 2025 marked a major step-change in the evolution of the OLA through the rapid expansion of the Grade 8 and 9 Coding and Robotics Programme into high schools across the GWF network.

This expansion represents an important strategic shift for GWF. Rather than ending digital exposure at primary school level, the organisation is now intentionally extending this exposure to relevant technology into adolescence, which is a critical stage where learners begin making subject choices, developing career interests, and forming beliefs about what future job prospects may be available to them.

### The reach of the Grade 8 and 9 Coding and Robotics programme expanded significantly during the year:

- 290 learners across one school in 2024
- 1,285 learners across four schools in 2025

This growth is not simply about scale. It represents GWF's growing role in helping rural learners access the kinds of technology exposure, digital literacy, and problem-solving skills that are increasingly shaping education systems and economies globally.

Through hands-on coding and robotics experiences, learners engage with computational thinking, engineering concepts, programming logic, teamwork, creativity, and applied problem-solving in ways that feel practical, exciting, and relevant to the modern world.

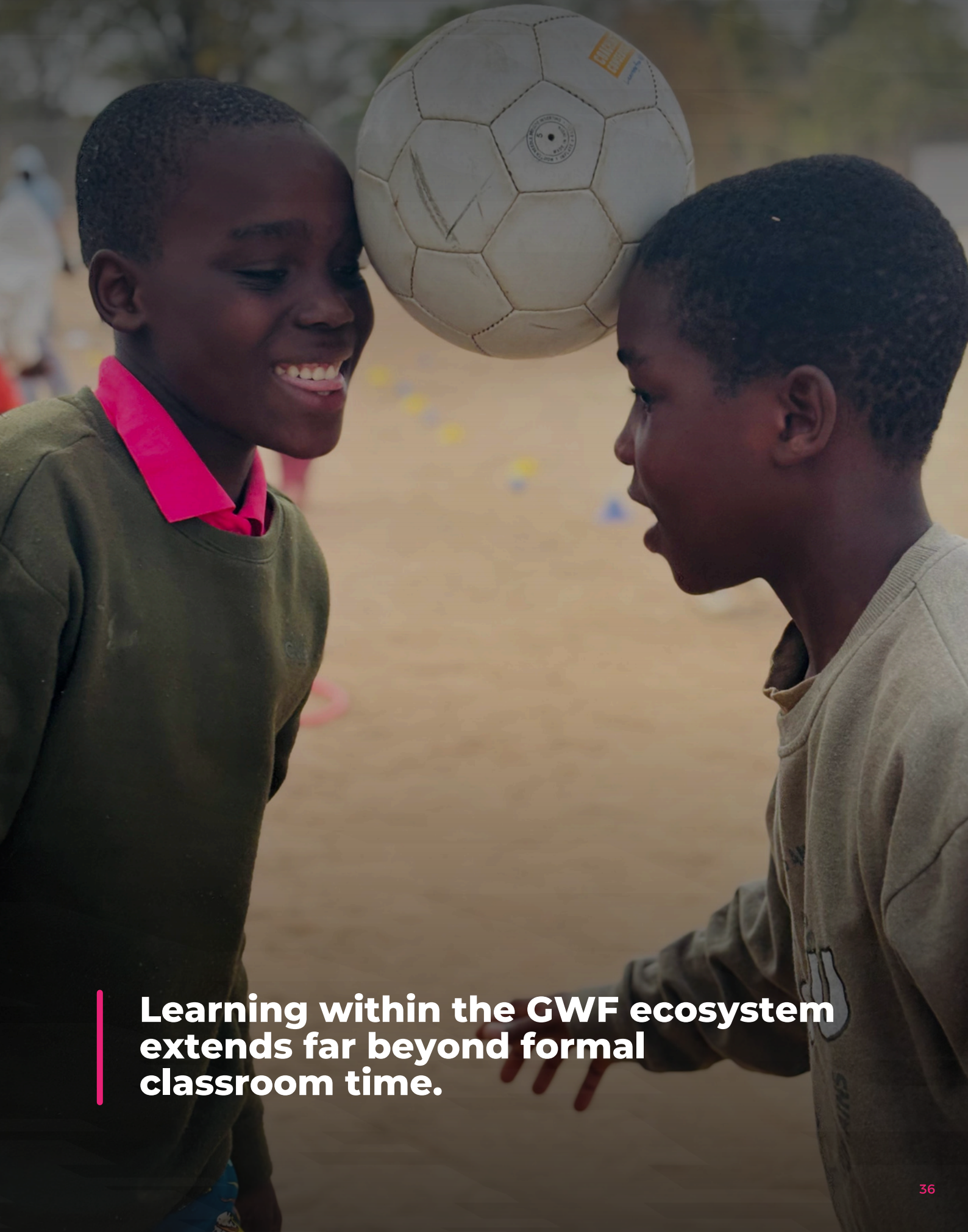
Using tools such as Scratch 3.0 and Dash and Dot robots, learners are introduced to coding in accessible and highly interactive ways that encourage experimentation, curiosity, resilience, and systems thinking.

Through this work, GWF also supports South Africa's broader national movement toward Coding and Robotics integration within schools, positioning the organisation as an important practical implementation partner within rural education contexts.

Insights gathered from participating learners during 2025 showed increased confidence in Mathematics and Science, stronger engagement in problem-solving activities, and growing interest in STEM-related subjects and career pathways.

This represents more than exposure to technology for these learners. It becomes an early encounter with futures that may previously have felt distant or inaccessible, helping young people begin to see themselves as capable participants in an increasingly digital and innovation-driven world.

## OLA AFTERNOON AND HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES



**Learning within the GWF ecosystem extends far beyond formal classroom time.**

## OLA AFTERNOON AND HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

**580** learners on average attend the afternoon programmes across campuses daily

Across all GWF campuses, afternoon programmes run from Monday to Thursday, creating safe, stimulating, and opportunity-rich environments where learners can continue exploring, creating, and engaging after the school day ends.

Attendance across the campuses averages approximately 580 learners per afternoon, reflecting both the strong demand for these spaces and the important role they play within the surrounding communities. This afternoon programme offers access to resources, mentorship, technology, creativity, and learning opportunities that may not otherwise be available within their immediate environments.

These sessions are not positioned as “extra lessons” or remedial support. Instead, they are intentionally designed to nurture curiosity, confidence, exploration, collaboration, and joy through informal, high-engagement learning experiences. Depending on the campus and programme stream, learners participate in activities ranging from coding and robotics to creative arts, reading, conservation learning, digital exploration, games, storytelling, problem-solving, and collaborative projects.

The atmosphere of the afternoon programme is intentionally different from traditional schooling environments. Learners are encouraged to experiment, ask questions, build relationships, express themselves creatively, and engage with learning in ways that feel dynamic, social, and exciting. Holiday programmes continue this approach throughout the year.

**During school holidays, GWF campuses transform into vibrant spaces of creativity, discovery, and play-based learning, offering immersive activities focused on design thinking, innovation, storytelling, technology, collaboration, and imagination.**

These programmes create important opportunities for learners to deepen friendships, strengthen confidence, remain engaged in positive learning environments during school breaks, and continue developing a lifelong association between learning and possibility. Together, the afternoon and holiday programmes help reinforce one of GWF’s core beliefs: that meaningful learning does not only happen within formal classrooms, but also through social environments that inspire young people to explore the world with curiosity, confidence, and wonder.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

**2025 marked a significant year of growth and maturation for the Open Learning Academy, both in terms of reach and long-term evidence of impact.**

The OLA network expanded from 31 schools in 2024 to 40 schools in 2025, reflecting growing demand for this offering across rural communities and partner schools.

Over the same period, total learner participation increased substantially from 9,635 learners in 2024 to 13,023 learners in 2025, making OLA one of the largest and most comprehensive components of the GWF ecosystem. This growth has not come at the expense of programme depth or learner engagement. As the network expands, GWF continues to invest in strengthening facilitation quality, digital systems, curriculum refinement, monitoring and evaluation, and long-term learner support across the ecosystem.

2025 also marked an especially meaningful milestone for the organisation as some of the earliest OLA learners reached matric and began reflecting on the long-term influence of GWF's work on their educational journeys and personal development. Insights gathered from these matriculants provided important longitudinal evidence of impact, particularly around confidence, literacy, digital exposure, communication skills, and future orientation.

With a Net Promoter Score of 92, learners consistently described OLA as a space that expanded their sense of possibility, strengthened their confidence, and helped build the foundational literacy and digital mindset that supported them throughout their schooling journeys. OLA is often not remembered simply as an educational programme, but as an environment that helped shape how they saw themselves, their capabilities, and their futures.

## VOICES FROM OLA



*“ I used to kill spiders, but now I know to never kill animals. ”*

*“ At GWF we are allowed to use computers, but don't have access to them at school. ”*

*“ We feel excited to be at GWF because we learn on computers and tablets. ”*

*“ We build robots and it helps us practise teamwork. ”*

# Teacher Support Programme.

The **Teacher Support Programme (TSP)** forms a critical part of the GWF ecosystem by supporting the educators who shape learning experiences within rural classrooms every day. We recognise that meaningful educational transformation cannot happen through learner interventions alone. Long-term systems change requires teachers to feel confident, supported, equipped, and empowered to navigate rapidly changing educational environments alongside their learners. The TSP is therefore designed not simply as a technology training initiative, but as a long-term partnership model that helps educators build confidence, adaptability, and practical digital teaching capacity within real classroom contexts.

**In 2025, TSP reached 439 educators across 40 rural public schools through 52 workshops delivered across the GWF network. Through highly practical, hands-on learning experiences, teachers are introduced to IT tools, digital platforms, classroom technology integration, and modern teaching methodologies that can strengthen learner engagement and participation.**

GWF's approach goes beyond simply providing devices or once-off training sessions. Facilitators work directly alongside teachers within classroom environments, helping educators integrate technology meaningfully into teaching and learning in ways that feel relevant, manageable, and supportive rather than intimidating or performative.

Over time, this sustained approach has contributed to a significant shift in teacher attitudes toward technology. What initially began as widespread uncertainty and apprehension around digital tools has increasingly evolved into confidence, curiosity, experimentation, and active digital advocacy within partner schools.

**In 2025, 100% of surveyed teachers agreed that technology is essential for learner success.**

The conversation has also evolved beyond basic digital literacy. Teachers are now proactively requesting training in emerging tools and technologies such as artificial intelligence, QR codes, and interactive digital learning platforms, reflecting their growing confidence and a willingness to continue adapting alongside the changing educational landscape.

Beyond technical skills development, strengthened teacher morale, clarity on professional identity, peer-to-peer learning, and long-term confidence within environments where educators are often under-resourced and under-supported have been reported. GWF continues working towards a broader vision of educational transformation in which teachers are not left behind by technological change, but are supported to become active participants and leaders within it.

# Bridging Year Academy.

The **Bridging Year Academy (BYA)** is GWF's flagship transition programme for young adults navigating the often difficult space between school and what comes next.

Designed for school leavers and unemployed youth, the BYA supports students as they move from adolescence into adulthood, helping them build the confidence, capabilities, and practical skills needed to access further study, employment, entrepreneurship, and meaningful participation in the modern economy.

For many students, this stage of life is marked by uncertainty. While formal schooling may have ended, pathways into work, tertiary education, and opportunity often remain unclear, inaccessible, or overwhelming, particularly within rural communities where unemployment rates are extremely high and exposure to professional environments can be limited.

The BYA exists to help close that gap. It is not designed simply as a job-readiness programme but a holistic developmental journey focused on helping young people strengthen communication, adaptability, digital confidence, professional identity, critical thinking, emotional resilience, and self-belief during a formative stage of life.

At the heart of this intervention is the belief that young people need more than technical skills alone to thrive in the modern world. They also need exposure, mentorship, confidence, networks, guidance, and opportunities to better understand both themselves and the environments they are stepping into. The curriculum therefore combines practical skills development with personal growth and real-world exposure.

Core programme areas include:

- English Communication
- Employability and Workplace Readiness
- Digital Literacy
- Online Learning Navigation
- Career Pathing
- Entrepreneurship
- Professional Communication and Collaboration

Alongside the formal curriculum, BYA Plus activities create additional opportunities for applied learning, relationship-building, leadership development, confidence-building, and social connection across the student cohort.

These experiences help create a strong sense of community and belonging while also encouraging students to step outside of their comfort zones, engage with new ideas, and begin imagining wider possibilities for their futures.

More broadly, the BYA plays a vital role within the GWF ecosystem by helping young people transition not only into work or study, but also into adulthood with greater confidence, agency, and preparedness for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP STREAM

2025 marked the launch of a new **Introduction to Entrepreneurship** stream within the BYA, reflecting GWF's growing recognition that many young people will need to navigate not only formal employment pathways, but also entrepreneurial and self-created opportunities within rapidly changing economies.

The stream was designed to help students develop entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, adaptability, initiative, and practical business skills in ways that felt accessible and relevant to their lived realities.

Students participated in hands-on business development activities, entrepreneurship simulations, collaborative problem-solving exercises, and pitch competitions that helped them explore entrepreneurship as something practical, creative, and possible.

Top participants were also featured on BlueHazy FM and GWF social media platforms, and got some media coverage, creating opportunities for public storytelling, confidence-building, visibility, and community engagement around youth entrepreneurship.

**BYA I2E 'Pitch Your Business' Winner  
2025**

**NELISIWE  
MATHEBULA**  
Huntington Digital Learning Campus

**Neli's  
Hot  
Chilli**

**GWF**

## WORK SHADOW PROGRAMME

2025 also marked the introduction of the BYA Work Shadow Programme, an important step in strengthening exposure to professional environments and real-world workplace experiences.

Students worked to find placements within workplaces across multiple industries, where they were able to observe professional environments, engage with employers and staff, and gain practical insight into workplace culture, communication, expectations, and career pathways. For many students, this was their first direct exposure to formal working environments and the experience helped bridge the often significant gap between theoretical employability preparation and the lived realities of professional spaces. Feedback from students demonstrated noticeable growth in confidence, communication, professionalism, workplace awareness, and self-belief following the placements.

**The programme also created valuable opportunities for relationship-building between GWF and employer partners, helping strengthen pathways between learning and livelihoods across the wider ecosystem. Most significantly, the feedback affirms that students are entering these experiences equipped with the interpersonal foundations developed through the BYA and that they are recognising and articulating that connection themselves. This is a powerful indicator of the BYA's impact.**

## SALESFORCE APP

2025 marked the second year of implementation of the BYA Salesforce App, an important component of GWF's broader digital transformation strategy. The platform supports real-time programme tracking, learner engagement monitoring, attendance management, insight generation, and adaptive programme development across the Bridging Year Academy.

Rather than functioning simply as an administrative tool, the system helps facilitators and programme teams better understand learner participation, progress, challenges, and support needs throughout the year. This enables more responsive decision-making, stronger learner support, and more informed programme refinement over time.

The continued development of the platform also reflects GWF's wider commitment to building digitally enabled learning ecosystems that combine human-centred facilitation with data-informed organisational learning and continuous improvement.

## BYA EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

**324**

Students graduated in 2025.

**182**

Students graduated with distinction.

**63**

Of 2026 Career Academy places were filled by BYA graduates.

## VOICES FROM BYA

*“The future is bright and I feel empowered by GWF.”*

*“GWF helped me to come out of my comfort zone.”*



*“I was shy, but now I’m able to communicate with people.”*

*“Now the future looks bright.”*

# Career guidance and university support.

Alongside its formal programmes, GWF continues to provide dedicated career guidance and tertiary support services to learners and young adults across the wider GWF network. For many rural students, accessing university or further study involves navigating complex systems that may feel unfamiliar, inaccessible, or overwhelming - particularly for first-generation applicants whose families may have little prior exposure to higher education processes.

GWF's career guidance support therefore plays an important role in helping young people move from aspiration into practical action. Support is provided to high school learners, BYA students, alumni, and other young people within partner schools across a range of areas, including:

- University applications
- TVET college applications
- NSFAS applications
- Registration support
- Scholarship and funding guidance
- Career planning and pathway exploration

This support extends beyond administrative assistance alone. The process also helps students build confidence, understand available opportunities, explore possible career pathways, and navigate important life decisions during periods of transition and uncertainty.

In many cases, GWF staff and facilitators walk closely alongside students throughout these processes, helping them overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent access to further education opportunities.

## **In 2025:**

- **149 university and TVET applications were supported**
- **62 GWF alumni received assistance with tertiary education applications**
- **15 external applicants from the broader community were also supported**

**This work reflects GWF's broader commitment to ensuring that young people are not only exposed to opportunity, but are also meaningfully supported in accessing and navigating it successfully.**

# Career Academies.

GWF's Career Academies provide specialised, industry-aligned pathways into employment sectors that are deeply connected to both local economies and global opportunities.

**Positioned within the broader Ecosystem of Learning and Working, the academies are designed to help young people transition from learning into practical, work-ready participation within industries that are actively shaping the future of the regions surrounding GWF campuses. The academies combine technical training with workplace exposure, mentorship, professionalism, confidence-building, and real industry engagement, ensuring that students are not only qualified, but also prepared to navigate professional environments successfully.**

Because many GWF campuses are located adjacent to conservation areas and tourism economies, the academies are intentionally aligned to sectors where real employment pathways exist within surrounding communities and partner networks. At the same time, programmes such as the IT Academy are helping create access to industries and opportunities that extend far beyond geographic limitations, connecting rural young people to the wider digital economy.

**Together, the Career Academies form an important bridge between education and livelihoods within the Good Work Foundation ecosystem.**

# Hospitality Academy.

The Hospitality Academy, in partnership with the South African College for Tourism, prepares rural young people for careers within the tourism and hospitality sectors, industries that play a vital role within the economies surrounding many GWF communities.

A combination of technical hospitality training with practical workplace exposure, professionalism, communication skills, customer engagement, teamwork, and personal development is the goal. GWF does not only prepare students for employment, it helps them build the confidence, adaptability, and interpersonal skills needed to thrive within high-performance professional environments.

**195**

Students have been trained since 2017.

**30**

Students graduated in 2025.

**100%**

Pass rate was achieved.

**100%**

Of graduates were successfully placed into internships for 2026.



## HOSPITALITY ACADEMY

Throughout the year, students participated in practical rotations across hospitality partners and tourism businesses, gaining direct exposure to workplace environments, operational systems, guest interaction, and industry expectations.

Highlights for the Hospitality Academy in 2025 included:

- **Increased practical time:** GWF worked with its partner network to increase practical training from two to eight weeks. Students have the opportunity to rotate through various departments and partners so that they gain as much exposure as possible to operations as well as to both boutique hotel and resort operations.
- **Annual GWF Coffee Competition:** GWF hosts an annual Coffee Competition to which the organisation's industry partners are invited. Apart from the competition experience, this provides the students with the opportunity to network with partners and potential employers. This supports the graduate recruitment process.
- **External training:** Network partners conduct training with the students, for example Food and Wine Workshop conducted in 2025. When this is done, where possible, GWF Hospitality graduates who have been appointed by the partners are included as presenters so that they can share their journey with the current students.
- **Panorama experience:** Students have the opportunity to experience the Panorama Route as guests. This includes the Graskop Gorge Lift, suspension bridge and forest walk, as well as a restaurant lunch. As much as possible, these experiences are guided by GWF graduates.



**These experiences help students begin seeing themselves not only as learners, but as emerging professionals within the tourism and hospitality economy.**

# Conservation Academy.

**The Conservation Academy prepares young people for careers within conservation, field guiding, environmental stewardship, and the broader wildlife economy.**

Situated within one of the world's most significant conservation regions, this academy provides students with both technical field-guiding qualifications and immersive exposure to the ecological systems, biodiversity, and conservation realities that shape the landscapes surrounding many GWF communities. The academy is rooted in the understanding that conservation cannot exist separately from community participation, livelihoods, education, and long-term local stewardship.

As many GWF campuses are located adjacent to protected conservation areas, the programme helps students explore the complex and interconnected relationship between conservation, tourism, ecology, employment, and rural communities living alongside wildlife landscapes. The academy therefore prepares students not only for employment within the conservation sector, but also to become informed, engaged, and environmentally conscious participants within the broader ecosystems surrounding their homes.

## In 2025:



Throughout the year, students participated in a wide range of experiential learning opportunities, conservation partnerships, and field-based experiences that brought classroom learning into direct engagement with real-world conservation work.

These experiences helped students build field confidence, deepen ecological understanding, and gain exposure to the kinds of research, monitoring, guiding, and conservation practice taking place in the landscapes surrounding GWF communities.

## ELEPHANT MEGACARCASS RESEARCH PROJECT

In 2025, Conservation Academy students participated in the Elephant Megacarcass Research Project alongside SANParks, researchers, rangers, and ecologist and writer Ryan Helcoski.

The project explored how elephant carcasses continue shaping the land long after these animals are gone, particularly by increasing local nutrients in African savannah soil and plants.

Each student spent a week working on the project in the field. This gave them extended time in the bush and valuable exposure to research science, practical fieldwork, and biodiversity monitoring.

Students were introduced to standard analytical methods, including radial line-intercept surveys and biodiversity monitoring, helping them understand how nutrient hotspots from megacarcasses over 1,000kg can reshape the savannah landscape.



As Sibusiso Mnisi, Head of the Conservation Academy, reflected:

**“It was an amazing project where our students each worked on this project for a week. This increased the amount of time they spent in the bush, and gave them the opportunity to learn about research science.”**

This experience also reflected a shared commitment among GWF, SANParks, researchers, and conservation partners to help develop the next generation of South African ecologists, field guides, and conservation professionals.

## CARE FOR WILD CONSERVATION EXPERIENCES

Conservation Academy students also gained exposure to the work of Care for Wild, the largest orphaned rhino sanctuary in the world.

Care for Wild specialises in the rescue, rehabilitation, rewilding, and protection of orphaned and injured rhinos, while also contributing to the preservation of endangered species and the ecosystems they depend on.

Through this partnership, students were exposed to the realities of rhino conservation, rehabilitation, wildlife protection, and the long-term care required to support endangered species. These experiences helped deepen their understanding of conservation as both a technical field and a long-term commitment to stewardship, protection, and ecological responsibility.

For students living in communities close to protected areas, this kind of exposure is especially valuable. It helps connect conservation learning to real places, real animals, and real career pathways within the wildlife economy.



## BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

**The Conservation Academy also continued to benefit from its connection with BirdLife South Africa.**



During the year, students learnt about BirdLife South Africa's Bird of the Year 2026, the Black Harrier. This created an opportunity to deepen their birding knowledge, species awareness, and understanding of South Africa's rich birdlife and conservation priorities.

GWF also received boxes of BirdLife South Africa magazines during 2025. A set of these has been placed in the Conservation Academy room as a learning resource for students, supporting ongoing reading, research, and species identification.

The magazines have also been shared with Grade 7 learners during their school safari experiences, giving younger learners a resource to take home and helping extend conservation awareness beyond the academy itself.

## WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH WILD SHOTS OUTREACH



Conservation Academy students also participated in wildlife photography training through **Wild Shots Outreach**.

This experience introduced students to photography as a tool for observation, storytelling, conservation awareness, and connection to the natural world.

Wildlife photography encourages students to slow down, notice detail, understand animal behaviour, and see landscapes through a different lens. It also helps build confidence, creative expression, and pride in the environments surrounding their communities.

For many students, this kind of exposure expands their understanding of conservation beyond field guiding alone. It opens up wider possibilities in environmental communication, storytelling, tourism, media, and advocacy.

Together, these practical experiences strengthened students' field skills, ecological understanding, species awareness, research exposure, and professional confidence within conservation environments.

# STUDENT PHOTOS



## STUDENT VOICES

A group of people, including students and guides, are seated in a safari vehicle. They are dressed in light-colored, practical clothing and hats, typical of a safari. One person is taking a photo of a large elephant standing in the savanna. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The elephant is the central focus of the scene, standing on a dirt path. The people in the vehicle are looking towards the elephant with interest. The overall atmosphere is one of a wildlife safari experience.

**I feel I have secured a future in nature guiding.**

**I have developed more compassion for animals and plants and the role they play in nature.**

# IT Academy.

The IT Academy equips young adults with the technical, professional, and adaptive skills needed to participate meaningfully in the rapidly evolving digital economy.

As technology continues to reshape industries, workplaces, and opportunities globally, the academy plays an important role in helping rural young people access pathways into sectors that have historically remained geographically, economically, and socially inaccessible.

At its core, this is about more than technical training alone. It is about helping young people develop the confidence, capability, and digital fluency needed to participate in industries that increasingly shape the future world of work.

The curriculum combines both theoretical and practical training across key IT competencies, including:

- IT fundamentals
- Networking
- Cybersecurity and systems security
- Technical support and troubleshooting

## In 2025:

**95%**

Pass rate was achieved.

**20**

Students participated in the programme.

**47%**

of 2025 graduates are working or studying further in 2026.

**76**

Total certificates earned. Successful students earned four certificates each

Students engage with real-world technical problem-solving, systems thinking, troubleshooting, teamwork, and applied digital learning experiences designed to strengthen both their technical competence and workplace readiness. The academy also places strong emphasis on adaptability, professionalism, communication, digital confidence, and continuous learning - qualities that are essential within fast-changing technology industries where skills and systems evolve rapidly.

**As part of GWF's broader commitment to future-facing learning, the IT Academy continues evolving alongside emerging global technology trends.**

## IT ACADEMY

In 2025, GWF began exploring curriculum developments in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and other rapidly growing digital fields to ensure students remain aligned with changing industry needs and future employment opportunities. Facilitators, graduates, and industry partners all play an active role in shaping and refining the curriculum, helping ensure that the academy remains both locally relevant and globally connected.

The IT Academy also demonstrates one of the core beliefs underpinning the wider GWF ecosystem: that a person's geographical location should not determine access to participation in the digital economy.

Through technology education, digital exposure, and relevant skills development, these young people begin seeing themselves not as passive observers of technological change, but as capable contributors within industries and opportunities that extend far beyond their immediate surroundings.

For many students, the academy represents a first meaningful step into industries, careers, and futures that may previously have felt distant or inaccessible - opening pathways into a world increasingly shaped by connectivity, innovation, and digital possibility.



# Facilitator Academy.

The **Facilitator Academy (FA)** prepares young people to become skilled, confident facilitators who can support learning across GWF's education ecosystem and beyond.

The programme plays a vital role in GWF's long-term staffing and leadership model. Many Facilitator Academy graduates go on to work within GWF's own campuses, bringing with them not only practical facilitation skills, but also a deep understanding of the organisation's culture, values, and approach to learning.

In 2025, the Facilitator Academy completed another transformative year-long programme across GWF's campuses.

The academy trains students to work within education spaces with both children and adults, helping them build positive cultures of learning and create stimulating environments that challenge traditional approaches to teaching.

Students followed a structured curriculum that blended theory with hands-on practical placements at GWF campuses. The programme included modules in Creative Bravery; English Language Proficiency; Child Development through the Zip the Crocodile Programme, and the SAQA-accredited ETDP Module: Facilitate Learning Using a Variety of Given Methodologies.

A notable milestone in December 2025 was the graduation of a cohort from the Care for Wild community, reflecting the academy's growing reach into new partner environments.

As with all GWF graduations, the ceremony was a moment of immense communal pride. Young people who had arrived uncertain of their futures left as confident facilitators, ready to contribute to the communities around them.

## In 2025:

**12**

Students participated in the programme.

**100%**

Pass rate was achieved.

**91.67%**

Of 2025 graduates are working or studying further in 2026.

The Facilitator Academy is one of the clearest examples of GWF's ecosystem in action. Young people are trained, supported, and then able to step into meaningful roles as facilitators, mentors, educators, and community leaders. Each year, these graduates become part of the human infrastructure that keeps the GWF learning ecosystem alive.

For many students, the academy is not only a pathway into employment. It is also a journey of confidence, identity, belonging, and personal growth.

## STUDENT VOICES FROM FA

**“I feel different about my future. I had no confidence and didn’t believe much in myself. I thought I would never make it in life. Being a Facilitator Academy student has helped me unleash potential that was untapped.”**



**“ GWF makes me feel like I have a sense of belonging. I feel I can be anything I want. ”**

**“ GWF helped me to see the outside world clearly. ”**

**“ I learnt a lot: patience, confidence, and willingness to grow. ”**

**“ GWF helped me to have direction in my life. ”**

# Pathways to employment.

At GWF, education is never treated as an end point. It is part of a longer journey towards confidence, participation, livelihoods, and meaningful work. This is why pathways into employment sit at the heart of the Ecosystem of Learning and Working. For young people in rural communities, the gap between learning and earning is often wide. Many leave school or training without the networks, experience, references, or first opportunities needed to enter the workplace. GWF works to close that gap by creating supported pathways from learning into work experience, internships, employment, entrepreneurship, and further study. In this way, the ecosystem does more than prepare young people for opportunity. It helps build the bridge toward it.

## Employment created through the GWF ecosystem:

GWF's ecosystem does not only prepare young people for work. It also creates work.

Across the organisation, GWF now employs 151 full-time staff, many of whom are alumni of its own programmes. Through VillageUp Impact, YES placements, Career Academy pathways, lodge partnerships, conservation partners, and other employer relationships, GWF is helping young people move from learning into real employment and work experience.

This is one of the clearest signs of the ecosystem working in practice: young people who once entered GWF as learners and students are now employed as facilitators, data analysts, digital agents, hospitality interns, conservation guides, radio broadcasters, and emerging professionals across the wider economy.

## YES PROGRAMME AND WORK PLACEMENT PATHWAYS

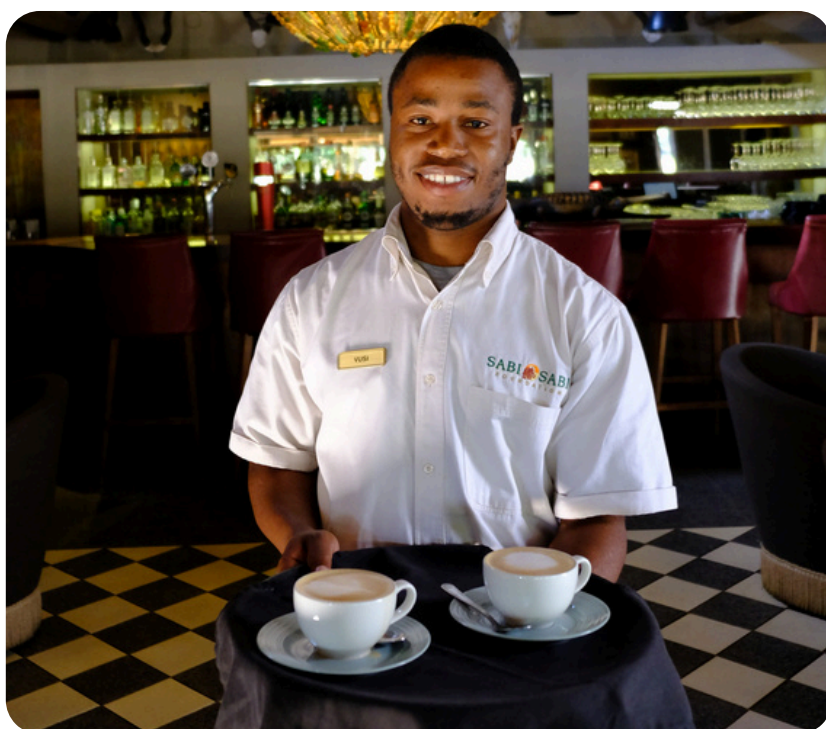
### Participating with the Youth Employment Service (YES) is one of the practical ways GWF helps young people take the next step from learning into work.

Through YES placements, GWF is able to create structured work experience opportunities for young people who are building their confidence, professional skills, and readiness for the workplace. These placements help bridge one of the most difficult gaps facing young South Africans: the gap between completing a learning programme and gaining meaningful first work experience.

Within the GWF ecosystem, YES placements are especially valuable because they allow young people to continue growing in a supported environment while contributing to real work across facilitation, operations, tourism, conservation, digital systems, and community-based programmes.

For many participants, this first year of structured work experience becomes a critical stepping stone. It helps them build workplace confidence, strengthen communication and professionalism, understand employer expectations, and begin seeing themselves as capable contributors within a working environment.

The YES Programme also strengthens GWF itself. Many young people placed through YES bring energy, local knowledge, digital skills, and lived understanding of the communities GWF serves. In this way, the programme does not only support employment pathways, it also strengthens the human capacity of the broader ecosystem.



**43**

Young people were placed through the YES Programme in **2024**.

**65**

In **2025**, this increased to 65 YES placements at GWF and with our partners.

## YES PROGRAMME AND WORK PLACEMENT PATHWAYS

***“Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve and The Sabi Sabi Foundation are proud to participate in the GWF Hospitality Academy learnership programme.***

***The GWF Hospitality Academy - Hazyview has been producing interns who are work ready, well-spoken in English, enthusiastic and committed to the standards of excellence that Sabi Sabi is known for. We have been exceptionally pleased with the level of quality of the students, when they join our lodge – this being testament of the care and passion that they are exposed to while training at campus.***

***It has been an immense pleasure to welcome these students to Sabi Sabi, and we are so pleased that we can assist in providing the necessary workplace skills, in assistance of all to become successful within the 5-star lodging and safari industry.”***

Hugo du Toit, General Manager at Sabi Sabi

***“Hanya House's partnership with the Good Work Foundation's YES programme has been one of our most valuable hiring channels since we opened in 2023. Five graduates have come through to date as twelve-month interns; three were absorbed into permanent roles at the end of their placements, one of whom remains with us today. The others have moved on to further opportunities - a mobility we see as a sign the programme is working. The calibre has risen year on year, with each cohort showing a stronger mix of digital fluency and hospitality instincts - the exact blend our environment needs. That hospitality instinct shows up consistently in client feedback: our guests and patrons regularly tell us how warm and engaged the team is, and the YES graduates are a real part of that.***

***Zinzi Masinga is the clearest example. She joined as an intern in our Remedy Bar, Hanya House's boutique health shop, and now manages it end to end: Customer relationships, stock and inventory, barista training, and the shop's accounting. Our current intern, Tutu, is two months in and has already moved from the Remedy Bar to our reception, where she handles bookings and payments for the twenty-two practitioners working from Hanya House. The YES programme doesn't simply supply us with team members. It gives us people we can build around.”***

Ryan James, MD, Hanya House Wellbeing Collaboration

# Looking ahead.

**As GWF moves into the next phase of Roadmap 2030, the organisation remains focused on building long-term pathways from learning into livelihoods for rural young South Africans.**

What began more than a decade ago in a dusty banana shed in Hazyview has grown into a deeply interconnected ecosystem of learning, working, leadership development, innovation, and community participation, one that continues to evolve alongside the changing realities of South Africa and the wider world.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Throughout this report, one theme has remained consistent: where a child is born should not determine the size of their future.**

This belief continues to shape every part of the GWF ecosystem from Reading Circles and Coding and Robotics, to the Bridging Year Academy, Career Academies, digital transformation systems, leadership development, and pathways into employment and entrepreneurship.

The years ahead will focus not only on expanding access, but on continuing to deepen quality, strengthen systems, and refine the long-term learning journeys that sit at the heart of the organisation's work.

Key priorities moving forward include:

- Launching the Dixie Campus
- Expanding Coding and Robotics into additional schools
- Strengthening digital transformation and real-time organisational learning
- Deepening AI and evolving learning pathways
- Growing strategic partnerships
- Strengthening pathways into employment and entrepreneurship
- Continuing to refine the Ecosystem of Learning and Working

**As highlighted in Kate's opening letter, GWF's work has always been rooted in the understanding that education must lead somewhere. That "somewhere" is not only employment. It is confidence, agency, participation, leadership, and belonging. It is helping young people see themselves as capable contributors within an increasingly chaotic world.**

Across the organisation, young people who once entered GWF as learners and students are now returning as facilitators, data analysts, broadcasters, conservation leaders, entrepreneurs, and staff members helping shape the future of the ecosystem itself. GWF remains committed to building an education ecosystem that is rooted in community, connected to opportunity, and responsive to the rapidly evolving future of work, technology, and society.

As South Africa and the world continue to change, the organisation's vision remains clear: to ensure that rural young people are not left behind by the future, but are equipped to participate fully, confidently, and meaningfully in shaping it. Because ultimately, this work is about far more than programmes, campuses, or technology. It's about restoring possibility and ensuring that young people growing up in rural communities are able to imagine futures for themselves that are expansive, dignified, connected, and full of opportunity.

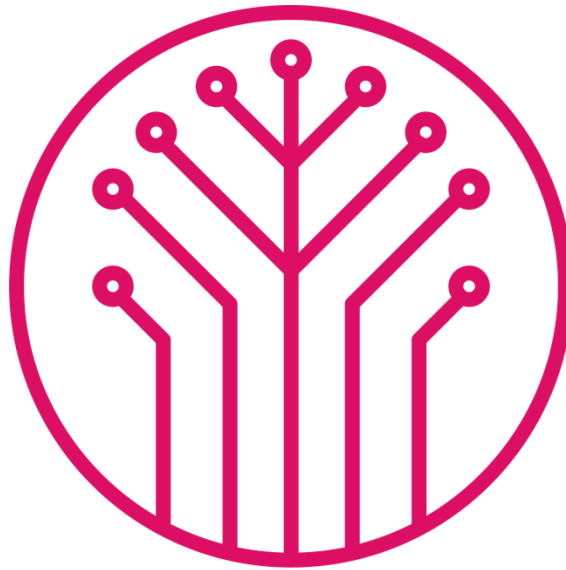
And it is about building a future in which no young person stands at the edge of progress watching the world move forward without them. Instead, they will help shape where it goes next.

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# GWFF

good work foundation

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Our vision is to expand our reach and impact to even more lives. To achieve this, we need partners who share our commitment to education and innovation. By supporting Good Work Foundation, you will be investing in the future of countless children and young adults who have the potential to become leaders, innovators, and change-makers.

With deep gratitude for your consideration.



**To learn more** about the Good Work Foundation, scan here.



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