

Q2 | 2026

Thornybush Community Impact Update

With Q2 now complete, Thornybush Community is pleased to share an overview of the impact achieved between April and June 2026.

APRIL



Gogos in Conservation, 2nd Camp

The second Gogos in Conservation camp of 2026 welcomed a new group of elderly participants to Jackalberry Lodge for a three-day immersive conservation experience in partnership with Elephants Alive's Ndlopfu Gogos and Thornybush Nature Reserve. Through activities including game drives, wildlife tracking, botanical education, storytelling, crocheting and blanket-making for local ECD centres, participants strengthened their connection to nature while giving back to local communities through their crafts.

The programme continues to empower gogos as custodians of culture and ambassadors for conservation, fostering meaningful connections between people, heritage and the natural environment.



Kick it for Community Soccer Tournament

On Freedom Day, the annual Kick It for Community tournament brought together Royal Malewane, Southern African Wildlife College, Nourish Eco Village and of course Thornybush Community, who proudly accompanied our defending champions, the Thornybush Ingwes. In its third year running, this tournament uses sports to unite communities around a shared purpose, community and conservation. Hosted at Thembisa Soccer Field, the event saw teams compete not only for victory but also to secure a community donation for Sigagule Village. The tournament continues to demonstrate how collaboration and sport can drive positive social impact while strengthening relationships between conservation organisations and neighbouring communities.



Wild Shots Outreach

Thornybush Game Lodge hosted the first Wild Shots Outreach game drive of 2026, providing 10 young participants from Acornhoek with practical wildlife photography experience in a real-world conservation setting. The excursion complemented their photography training while fostering a deeper connection with nature and developing valuable creative and technical skills. Through this partnership, young people from neighbouring communities gain access to meaningful experiences that enhance learning, employability and future opportunities.



School Safari Game Drives, Manyangana High School

Manyangana High School joined the School Safari Game Drives programme for the first time, giving 8 learners the opportunity to experience wildlife firsthand and explore careers in conservation and hospitality. Guided by experienced lodge staff and joined by their educator, the learners combined environmental education with a behind-the-scenes tour of Simbambili Game Lodge, connecting their classroom studies to real-world opportunities. As the third School Safari Game Drive of 2026, the programme continues to inspire young people through meaningful conservation and career exposure.



Wisani Day Care Security Upgrades

The infrastructure project at Wisani Day Care was successfully completed through a collaborative partnership, with Thornybush Community contributing roofing material, labour, burglar bars and doors to create a safe and secure learning environment. The completed classroom and office facilities have strengthened the centre's capacity to provide quality early childhood education and care to 87 children.



Driver's Licence Support Programme, Uthla

Thornybush Community officially launched its new Skills Development social impact pillar with the introduction of the Driver's Licence Support Programme, aimed at improving employability and economic opportunities for local youth. In partnership with Dumezulu Driving School, the first cohort of 5 beneficiaries began professional learner's and driver's licence training, with 4 participants successfully obtaining both their learner's and driver's licences, while the 5th has passed their learner's licence and is awaiting their driver's licence test.

The programme marks an important step in equipping community members with practical skills that promote independence, confidence and long-term career development.



Hygiene Support – Towels for Wisani Day Care, Good Life Creche, RISE Creche @ Nourish

With the support of Simbambili Game Lodge, Thornybush Community donated towels and facecloths to Wisani Day Care, Goodlife Creche and Rise Creche, helping to create healthier and more supportive early learning environments. The initiative strengthens ECD centres by promoting the wellbeing, comfort and dignity of young children during their formative years.

Winter Warmer Gown Donations and Pfukani Islington Centre for People with Disability

As part of the Winter Warmer Campaign, Thornybush Community donated 97 winter gowns to the Pfukani Islington Centre for People with Disability, providing practical support to vulnerable community members during the colder months. Made possible through the support of Simbambili Game Lodge, the initiative reflects the value of partnerships in delivering meaningful and sustainable community impact.



📅 JUNE



The Long Run Southern & Western Africa Regional Hub Meeting

Thornybush Community participated in The Long Run Southern & Western Africa Regional Hub Meeting at Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, where sustainability and social impact leaders explored stronger integration between conservation and community development.

The three-day event provided valuable opportunities to share knowledge, learn from leading sustainability initiatives and strengthen collaborations across the responsible tourism sector. The insights gained will continue to inform and strengthen Thornybush Community's approach to creating lasting social and environmental impact.



Unity Agrifarm Cooperative Painting with Simbambili Game Lodge Employee Volunteers

Simbambili Game Lodge Community Champions volunteered their time at Unity Agrifarm Cooperative, supporting a site improvement project through a hands-on painting initiative. As part of Thornybush Community's Enterprise Development pillar, the initiative strengthened a local enterprise that promotes food security, skills development and income generation. The project highlights the positive impact of employee volunteering in building stronger community partnerships and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

The project reflects Thornybush Community's ongoing commitment to creating sustainable environments that support the wellbeing and educational success of more than 700 learners at the school.



Hoedspruit Farmers Market

Thornybush Community joined the Hoedspruit Farmers Market. This platform will help raise awareness of our work while creating sustainable fundraising and market access opportunities for programme beneficiaries. At the first market, Enterprise Development beneficiary Ndhuna Mabaso Farms successfully showcased and sold a range of fresh, locally grown produce, demonstrating the potential of community-based enterprises. The initiative supports local economic growth by connecting small businesses with new customers and promoting long-term sustainability.



Official Handover of Manyangana High School NSNP Kitchen

During Youth Month, Thornybush Community officially handed over the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) kitchen at Manyangana High School, strengthening the school's capacity to provide safe, nutritious meals for its learners. Delivered through the Educational Support pillar, the facility improves food preparation, storage and security, addressing a critical infrastructure need.

GKEPF Protected Areas Tournament

The Thornybush Ingwes participated in the GKEPF Protected Areas Tournament, joining teams from Timbavati Nature Reserve, Klaserie Private Nature Reserve and the Rolle Cosmos in a day of sport, community engagement and conservation awareness. The tournament highlighted the role of sport in strengthening relationships between protected areas and surrounding communities while promoting teamwork and collaboration.



Through initiatives like these, we continue to support programmes that create positive impact both on and off the field.

The outreach marked the beginning of new partnerships with these care facilities, extending Thornybush Community's support to additional beneficiaries in neighbouring communities.

Bookkeeping & Admin Training for 2 Enterprises through forgood platform

Through the forgood volunteer platform, Gauteng-based volunteer and bookkeeper Dipuo Motsamai is delivering a 10-week online Bookkeeping and Administration programme to 3 team members from 2 of Thornybush Community's Enterprise Development programme beneficiaries. Through weekly sessions covering business planning, bookkeeping, taxation, basic accounting, data analysis, due diligence, Excel and administrative skills, participants are building the practical knowledge needed to strengthen the sustainability and long-term success of their cooperatives.



Community Advocacy Feature

Through the ongoing support of US-based advocate Mary Kay Mason, we provided hygiene and stationery packs to 40 vulnerable learners at Hananani Primary School, helping to remove barriers to learning and improve learner wellbeing. Mary Kay's decades-long commitment demonstrates the lasting impact of sustained partnerships in supporting education and creating opportunities for young people. Her continued advocacy reflects the power of long-term collaboration in driving meaningful community change.

Hygiene Support – Towels for Hlayisekani Nursing Home and Ntalo Old Age Centre

With the support of Simbambili Game Lodge, we once again donated 305 towels to Hlayisekani Nursing Home, Hlayisekani Disability Centre and Ntalo Old Age Centre, promoting hygiene, dignity and quality care for vulnerable residents.



Gogos in Conservation, 3rd Camp

The third Gogos in Conservation camp of 2026 welcomed participants from Dixie and Uthla villages to Jackalberry Lodge, Thornybush Nature Reserve. Through game drives, conservation education and the creation of handmade blankets for local ECD centres, participants strengthened their connection to nature while making a contribution to their communities. The camp continues to create meaningful opportunities for lifelong learning, conservation awareness and community connection.

Thornybush
COMMUNITY



Thank you for your continued support!
The journey continues...

GET IN TOUCH

Contact Thornybush Community

✉ busisiwe@thornybush.com

☎ +27 (0)83 5700 379

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