



EMPOWERING YOUTH STEWARDSHIP

A Corporate Social Responsibility Partnership Opportunity



**KNYSNA
ESTUARY**
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Presented by
**Knysna Estuary
Research Foundation**

2026

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What if the next generation of environmental leaders is already here?

The Knysna Estuary is one of South Africa's most extraordinary natural environments. It supports exceptional biodiversity, provides livelihoods and recreational opportunities, and forms an important part of the identity of our community.

But the future of this environment depends on more than protecting habitats.

It depends on developing people who understand, value and feel responsible for them.

Many young people in our local communities have limited access to environmental education, scientific experiences, technology and opportunities to explore careers in conservation and environmental science.

The **Empowering Youth Stewardship Programme** was created to bridge that gap.

Led by the **Knysna Estuary Research Foundation (KERF)**, the programme provides young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with opportunities to learn about their environment, develop practical scientific and leadership skills, experience the natural world first-hand and become advocates for their communities.

Following a hugely successful pilot in 2026. We aim to expand the programme to **two groups of young people in 2027, reaching a total of 20 learners.**

OUR APPROACH

We don't believe environmental education should happen only inside a classroom.

We put young people in the environment they are learning about.

Learners investigate rivers and estuaries, collect environmental data, work with scientists, explore conservation challenges, analyse their own results and develop the skills to communicate what they discover.



OUR GOAL

To equip young people with the knowledge, practical skills and confidence to become environmental stewards, community leaders and advocates for the places they call home.

LEARNING

Learners develop an understanding of environmental science and the challenges facing their local environment.

They explore:

The Scientific Method

Understanding how scientists ask questions, develop hypotheses, collect evidence and draw conclusions.

Water & Environmental Health

Learn how scientists investigate the health of rivers and estuaries.

Citizen Science

Take part in real environmental monitoring and contribute to local knowledge and citizen science projects.

Computer Literacy and Data Analysis Skills

Learn basic computer literacy skills and how to organise, analyse and present scientific data using tools such as Word and Excel.

Communication and Leadership Skills

Learners develop practical communication and storytelling skills through:
Public speaking, storytelling, poster design, social media and environmental advocacy



THE EXPERIENCE

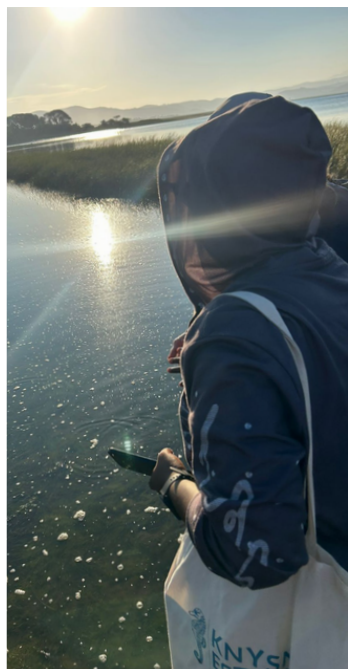
Learning comes alive when young people can experience nature for themselves.

Learners will have opportunities to:

- **Get on the water** — boat trips on the estuary and ocean, plus swimming and snorkelling experiences.
- **Think like scientists** — design experiments and collect real environmental data in the field.
- **Explore nature** — investigate the estuary, rivers and aquatic life through hands-on activities.
- **Learn from local experts** — connect with scientists and conservationists working in the Knysna environment.
- **Take action** — plan and implement a community clean-up as real environmental advocates.
- **Share their stories** — communicate their experiences, discoveries and connection to nature with the wider Knysna community.



Building knowledge, confidence, connection and a sense of responsibility for the environment.



IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

KNOWLEDGE

Learners develop a deeper understanding of the Knysna Estuary, environmental challenges and conservation.

PRACTICAL SKILLS

Learners gain hands-on experience in scientific methodologies, environmental sampling, data collection and analysis.

DIGITAL & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Learners develop experience using technology, presenting information, creating environmental messaging and communicating with different audiences.

CONFIDENCE & LEADERSHIP

Learners are given opportunities to speak, make decisions, lead activities and take ownership of conservation projects.

CAREER EXPOSURE

Learners meet people working in science, conservation and environmental fields and are introduced to potential career and study pathways.

CONNECTION

Perhaps most importantly, learners develop a stronger personal relationship with the environment around them.

20 YOUNG PEOPLE



DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS



SHARE WHAT THEY LEARN



ENGAGE THEIR COMMUNITIES



TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION



CREATE A CULTURE OF STEWARDSHIP



Funding Goal

YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

SUPPORT

We aim to raise **R269,000** to deliver the 2027 Youth Stewardship Programme to **two groups, reaching approximately 20 young people.**

Your support will help provide learner transport, field experiences, scientific equipment, educational resources, community action and professional programme delivery.



Choose a Level of Support

YOUTH SUPPORTER

R5,000+

Programme recognition
Supporting local youth and environmental education

STEWARDSHIP PARTNER

R15,000+

Brand recognition
Social media acknowledgement
Programme impact updates

ESTUARY CHAMPION

R30,000+

Enhanced brand visibility
Social media storytelling
Impact reporting
Programme engagement opportunities

PROGRAMME PARTNER

R50,000+

Prominent programme recognition
Dedicated social media storytelling
Impact reporting
Opportunities to connect with learners and experience the programme in action

ONE-OFF OR IN-KIND SUPPORT

Any amount

Flexible support
Equipment, transport, meals or professional services
Immediate contribution to programme delivery

More Than a Logo

We want our corporate partnerships to be meaningful.
Depending on the level of support, partners can receive:

BRAND VISIBILITY

Recognition across selected programme communications, events and materials.

SOCIAL MEDIA STORYTELLING

Opportunities to share the story of your company's investment in local youth and conservation.

IMPACT REPORTING

Updates showing how your contribution has been used and what it has helped achieve.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities to connect with learners and experience the programme in action.

A LOCAL CSR STORY

A tangible example of your business investing in young people and the environment within the community where you operate.

A detailed programme budget is available on request.

**INVEST IN YOUTH.
INVEST IN THE ESTUARY.
INVEST IN KNYSNA'S FUTURE.**



Knysna Estuary Research Foundation

Knowledge to protect what
connects us

The Knysna Estuary Research Foundation (KERF) is a Knysna-based registered non-profit organisation (127-588 NPO | PBO No. 930044651) dedicated to understanding and protecting coastal and estuarine systems, with a particular focus on how these environments change and how communities can live sustainably within them. Our applied research helps inform the management of local ecosystems while contributing to innovative approaches to coastal conservation. Our work is guided by four interconnected pathways: Research, Educate, Conserve and Collaborate. By combining science with environmental education, community engagement and partnerships, we aim to strengthen the relationship between people and nature and inspire informed action to safeguard the Knysna Estuary and other coastal systems for future generations.



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GET IN TOUCH

Interested in supporting the Youth Stewardship Programme or partnering with KERF? We would love to hear from you.

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