

# DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage

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WELCOME TO DAKTARI BUSH SCHOOL & WILDLIFE ORPHANAGE  
DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage is an NGO founded in 2006 located in the South African bush, near Kruger National Park. DAKTARI works to educate and inspire children to value their environment and stimulate community development. DAKTARI provides the perfect environment for children to learn about their natural heritage. The children visit DAKTARI for 5 days to complete the teaching program and work with the animals in our wildlife orphanage. Volunteers from all over the world teach the lessons and guide the children in caring for the animals. DAKTARI also runs an outreach program for a greater impact in the communities. The weekly ECO CLUB and Wildlife Crime campaigns give the children the opportunity to ignite positive attitudes towards their valuable environmental heritage. ABOUT USA love story that became DAKTARI Ian and Michèle Merrifield officially opened DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage in 2006. But it was a long road to make that happen! They met while Ian was working as a game ranger at Tshukudu Game Lodge and Michèle was volunteering there. While hand-raising injured zebras, wildebeest, and warthogs, Ian and Michèle fell in love. Michèle had long dreamed about living in Africa and taking care of the wildlife. When she met Ian, she was able to realise that dream. They left

Tshukudu after getting married and opened a restaurant in Hoedspruit to start raising capital for their own wildlife orphanage. While there, Ian and Michèle helped raise a local boy named Thabo. He had almost no knowledge or understanding of his native wildlife and environment. Therefore, Ian and Michèle began using the animals in their care to teach him. Thabo's understanding of conservation was typical of children in Limpopo and the idea of adding a bush school was born. So where did the name DAKTARI come from? Michèle says, "When we were younger, there was a TV program called Daktari. It was about a family in Africa, who looked after and raised many different types of orphaned wild animals. As kids we loved it and we remember getting deeply emotionally attached to the different animals." Sounds familiar, right? Michèle and Ian adopted the name and so DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage was born. OUR MISSION The mission of DAKTARI is to educate and inspire local children to value their environment and stimulate community development. Through the combination of the bush school and the wildlife orphanage, DAKTARI has developed an immersive educational experience for local children to learn about the wildlife around them, the environment, anti-poaching and a wide variety of other issues. Right in the middle of the bush! Our work extends into the local community through ECO CLUBs at the secondary schools, outreach campaigning in several schools and other community development projects.

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