



# Keeping Hope Afloat

Transforming Marginalised Youth Through  
Sailing Therapy, Safe Spaces & Optimism

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Section 18A exempt

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Trust IT002355/2016(C)

USA 501c3 Fiscal Partner



# 90% of Children Who Need Mental Health Support Receive None

## THE SCALE

- In Cape Town's marginalised communities, less than 10% of children needing mental health care actually receive it.
- This 90% treatment gap is common in under-resourced settings worldwide
- South Africa faces very high youth trauma, poverty-linked depression, and school dropout.

90%

## THE HUMAN COST

- Without intervention, children face cycles of poverty and unemployment.
- The absence of safe spaces and mental health access, traps generations.
- **Optimism is a powerful health tonic** — it is absent where it is needed most.

# Born from Adversity. Built on Optimism.

After surviving **2 open-heart surgeries** and **200 days in hospital**, founder **Greg Bertish** sailed a tiny 8-foot dinghy around the Cape of Good Hope to raise funds to upgrade and rennovate children's hospitals.

His story became a movement. In 2016, he published *The Little Optimist* children's book. In 2017, he founded the Trust — rooted in one belief: **Optimism can change lives!**

Today, The Little Optimist Trust is a globally recognised, award-winning organisation operating from the V&A Waterfront, Cape Town — and scaling across South Africa.



— 2019 — 2021 — 2022 — 2024 — 2025 — 2026 —

Dame Charity Award - Amsterdam (Joint Winner)	Sport Impact Paris Olympics 2024 - Laureate	Sailing Therapy Academy launched at V&A Waterfront	IOC Advancing Olympism 365 — Laureate & Grant	x3 pilot sites launched x1 Feeding & mentorship program launched	Laureus Sports for Good Foundation Grant Winner
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# A Proven, four-pillar Model that Breaks the Cycle



## INSPIRE

Hospital & school visits, inspiration days, storybooks



## TRANSFORM

Safe Space creation & renovation of under-resourced facilities



## EMPOWER

Sailing Therapy Academy — Blue Mind healing, growth mindset programmes



## EDUCATE

Skills development, mentorship, pathways to employment



*Our brains are hardwired to react positively to water — it can calm and connect us, increase innovation and insight, and even heal what is broken.*

— Dr Wallace J Nichols, Blue Mind

# Nine Years of Measurable, Award-winning Impact

279,000+

CHILDREN & YOUTH REACHED

2,150+

SAILING THERAPY  
BENEFICIARIES

54%

FEMALE PARTICIPATION

13

SAFE SPACE PROJECTS

6,000+

FREE STORYBOOKS  
DISTRIBUTED

90%

INTERNS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME

## Monitoring & Evaluation Outcomes

Data shows improvements in motor skills, confidence, independence and focus.

"Today, I have been brave"

— Mushfeeqah, age 8

"Sailing made me realize that I could do anything!."

— Khanyisa, age 16

# Sailing Therapy Merges Evidence-based Science with Real-world Transformation

## OUR PROGRAMMES

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### Sailing Thru Life

One-day immersive sailing therapy experience.

### Broadening Horizons

Multi-day programme: emotional regulation, sailing theory, science, growth mindset, life skills and mentorship.

### Pilot Sites

Community-based replication model now active at 3 sites across South Africa.

### Train the Trainer

Capacity-building for practitioners to implement safe, inclusive sports programmes .

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE

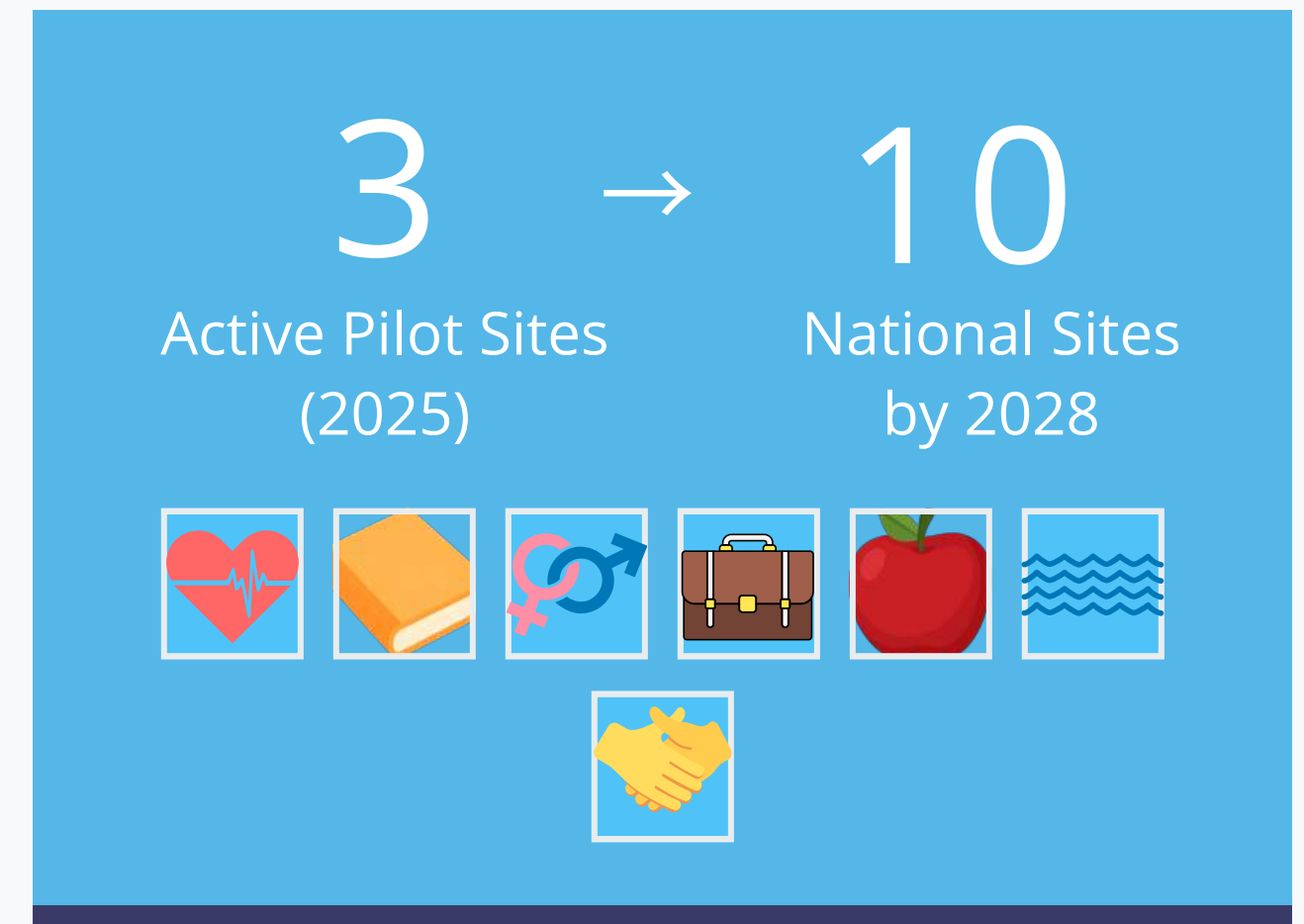
- Drowning prevention & water safety
- Blue Mind therapy (on-water sailing)
- Storytelling & knot-tying
- Growth mindset activities
- Ocean education
- Nutritious meals
- Mentorship
- Certificates of achievement

# Scaling a Proven Model Across South Africa and Beyond

The Little Optimist Trust has expanded from a single sailing programme at the V&A Waterfront to a national scaling model — with 3 active pilot sites launched in 2025 and a roadmap to reach 10 sites by 2028.

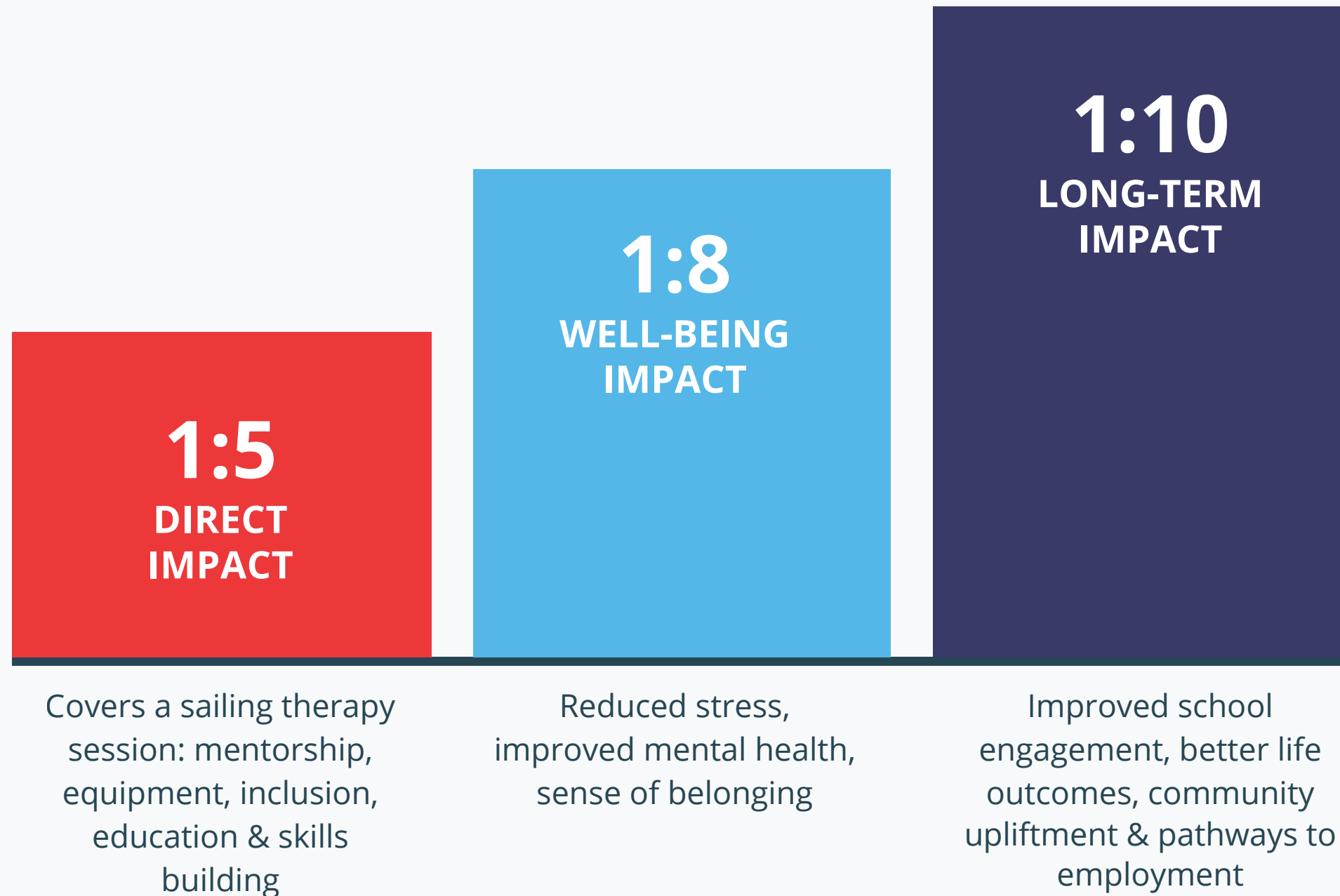
## 2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Expand Sailing Therapy to 5 additional communities
- Launch adaptive sailing boats (prototype ready) for differently-abled youth
- Grow the Train the Trainer programme to multiply impact
- Establish a permanent Community Sailing Club House & Safe Space
- Develop a High Performance Sailing pathway for talented youth



# For Every ZAR Invested, the Return is Transformational

## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)



## 2025 FUNDING STREAMS



All donations receive ZAR Section 18a or USD 501(c)3 and multi country tax exemptions through Trust Bridge.

# Partner With Us — Multiple Ways to Create Lasting Impact

OPPORTUNITY	INVESTMENT (ZAR)	IMPACT DELIVERED
Sponsor a child for a day	R650	1 child's full sailing therapy experience
Fund storybooks for 20 kids	R1,500	Educational workbooks + storybooks
Therapy programme for 10 kids	From R6,500	Group sailing therapy session
Sponsor a therapy boat for a year	R66,000	Named boat, brand visibility, 100+ sessions
Fund a pilot site or feeding programme	R150,000 p/a	Full community site for 1 year
Community Sailing Club House & Safe Space	R170,000 p/a	Permanent safe space for a community
High Performance racing programme	R170,000 p/a	2 youth athletes + 1 coach for a year
Adaptive Optimist boats (x2 prototypes)	R470,000	Inclusive sailing for differently-abled youth
Transport & service vehicle purchase	R770,000	Enables all outreach and programme delivery

## Corporate Sponsorship

Become a Brand Sponsor to secure naming rights, media exposure, ESG reporting alignment, and meaningful staff engagement opportunities.

# Let's Set Sail Together

The Little Optimist Trust is a globally recognised, evidence-based, award-winning organisation with a proven model, credible partners, and a clear roadmap to scale. We are not just changing individual lives — we are building a movement of optimism in communities that need it most.

## CONTACT US

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## OUR TRUSTED PARTNERS

- Laureus Sport for Good • IOC Advancing Olympism 365 • NSRI • Italtile
- Hope House Counselling Centre • Balance Catamarans • Ullman Sails
- Southern Wind • Willis Towers Watson • Laurium Capital • V&A Waterfront
- Two Oceans Marine Manufacturing • South African Sailing



*I may be slow and I may be small.  
My sail is square and I'm not so tall.  
But I am special and I have heart.*

*My dreams are big  
and this is just the start.*



