



THE THEMBISA TRUST

Grassroots support
in South Africa

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Kennington Overseas Aid funds new Bonginkosi pre-school

Our previous newsletter described the abject poverty of the families whose children attend the Bonginkosi pre-school near Edendale, and the dilapidated, unsafe structure that has served as the pre-school for 26 years. Since then we have had wonderful news – it is going to be possible to build a new preschool, thanks to the generosity of Kennington Overseas Aid (KOA).

Each year KOA, based in the village of Kennington near Oxford, selects one overseas project to fund. The criteria are that people are in great need, and that the large sum granted will be used for a specific tangible benefit. The applications include a number of very deserving projects, so we were absolutely thrilled when our application on behalf of Bonginkosi was selected for 2006.

KOA has been raising and granting funds in this way for 38 years, and last year they raised over £20,000 for a farming project in Kenya. Their fundraising programme, all based in Kennington, runs mainly through the summer. Events this year included a grand fete, family fun run and walk, tea party, second-hand shop, KOA church service, and several meals and musical evenings – including

Think big, start small

Tonia Cope Bowley, Thembisa Trust Co-founder

This is exactly what Thembisa did at its foundation in 1988, and that is what Thembisa is still doing. In the beginning we saw the vast need in South Africa (and Africa) and realised that although we could not solve the problem of lack of opportunity, poverty, homelessness, etc, we could at least make a contribution.

The THINK BIG dream is symbolised by Thembisa's logo, the baobab tree, rooted in South Africa, with branches spreading throughout Africa. It is well known that development and progress in South Africa has ripple effects throughout Africa, so Thembisa's starting point in South Africa is highly relevant to the continent.

One THINK BIG project Thembisa has supported for many years, is the African Enterprise's Africa Leadership Development Institute. (See www.africanenterprise.org.za). Many of the diverse training courses are held at AE's head quarters near Pietermaritzburg. They range from courses for school children to top business, community and government leaders. This quote from ALDI's website throws further light on ALDI:

ALDI is not a western import. It consists of viable, high quality leadership development vehicles that work, and it was made in Africa. ALDI is the result of combined efforts from diverse and highly capable individuals: a Kenyan leadership consultant, an Ethiopian human resources manager, a Zulu legal and strategy consultant, an American raised and working in southern Africa, a Capetonian chartered accountant, an Afrikaans peace worker, and many others.

ALDI is committed to see Africa renew her dignity and progress into a peaceful,

stable and prosperous future through an exponential growth of African leaders possessing an integrity and ability that is authentic to both Christian Scripture and African cultures.

The ALDI project's dream and objective is in many ways concurrent to Thembisa. We started out knowing that if we could enlist enough supporters, one at a time, eventually the THINK BIG dream of giving a chance in life to many, many people could be realised.

Growing up

Those of you whose mathematics is up to it will know that Thembisa turned 18 this year! In the current culture this is the time to celebrate and mark the rite of passage from child dependence to adulthood. So what are we doing about that?

This year, 2006, Thembisa celebrates and thanks Kennington Overseas Aid (KOA) for their yearlong fundraising efforts for African Enterprise's Bonginkosi programme to support children at risk. Read further about this at www.africanenterprise.org.za, and www.koa.org.uk.

Next year, 2007, we will spend focused time planning our twentieth celebrations, enlisting many new members and devising new fund raising strategies.

The year 2008 – Thembisa turns 20. We will celebrate! The fulcrum of the celebrations aims at reviewing projects funded – past and present. More importantly we will seek mechanisms to grow so that Thembisa becomes more effective and able to support more projects, and support some existing ones more extensively.

So the time has come to shift our thinking to THINK BIG, BE BIG!

Won't you help?





Bethesda's quilts and hangings doing well

Jeni Couzyn, Director, Bethesda Foundation

The Bethesda Arts Centre provides training in the arts and life skills to the community of Nieu Bethesda in the Karoo. This community has almost no other sources of income.

Pomegranate, our group of women making textiles, is going from strength to strength. It is still sixteen strong, and they are now making wall hangings, cushion covers, bags, and the most amazing quilts. The quality of the work is now consistent, and the designs are original, expressive and each one different and memorable in its own right. The women are becoming confident, and are earning a living from what they make.

Our big news is that Pomegranate has been commissioned to make two wall

hangings for the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg (a museum celebrating justice). It is full of the very best of South African art, so to have two wall hangings there is the most amazing honour.

In July Snoeks Desmond, from the family Literacy programme in Kwazulu Natal, came to the Centre and ran a course for five women in teaching family literacy at the Bethesda Arts Centre. The five are now running three groups of their own in the Centre library, each group consisting of around twelve women doing a twelve-week course.

Our annual lantern festival got into a newly published book called 365 Ways to Change the World.



Kennington Overseas Aid continued

performances of *The Yeomen of the Guard* by Kennington United Choirs, and a West End musical concert by Charity Opera.

Those of us who attended some of these events were greatly struck by the energy, commitment, generosity and community spirit of the people involved. We do not yet know what the final amount will be, but we know that it will be enough to begin work on a permanent, equipped building. The large contribution from KOA may well encourage others to help make up any shortfall, perhaps with specific donations in kind, such as bricks.

Sandra Pillay, the administrator of African

Enterprise (which will oversee the rebuilding) wrote as follows earlier this year: "We have had some heavy rainfalls particularly in November and December last year. I had been thinking about the preschool and the adverse impact that such heavy rainfalls would have on the already crumbling walls."

We join Sandra and all involved with Bonginkosi in expressing our sincere gratitude to Mrs Sylvia Vetta, Chair of KOA, the KOA committee members, and all the wonderful people of Kennington, whose efforts are going to make such a big difference in the lives of the children who attend Bonginkosi.



A new project – Ingelozzi Eyetu

Tonia Cope Bowley

This we discovered in the Free State at Van Reenen, Oban Guest Farm – my early childhood home! It is truly one of the tranquil beauty spots of the world, but the unemployment and consequent suffering of the local people blots the loveliness.

The current owners bought the place a few years ago after it had been closed for 8 years. Not only have they made a place where people can recharge their batteries, and provided employment for a few of the locals, but out of their concern for the impoverished locals have started a project teaching the women to make bead crafts - starting with angels! ('Ingelozzi Eyetu' means 'Our own angels') Their aim is to provide continual work for these people and hence reliable family incomes.

Thembisa is delighted to help this upliftment project get off the ground.



► *Beadwork angels*

► *Rural dwellings in the shadow of Nelsonskop*





Newly funded project 2006

Sinethemba shelter

Sinethemba, near Port Shepstone on the South Coast of Natal, is a shelter for women and children who have been abused. It was established by the Ifafa Women's group in 2005 to deal with the increasing numbers of rape and abuse victims. Women come from as far afield as Gauteng to the three-bedroomed house, where they and their children can stay temporarily.

Sadly, there are many victims, some because of alcohol-fuelled violence; others have included an 84-year-old lady beaten by her grandson for her pension, and a 64-year-old stroke victim raped by her neighbour. At Sinethemba the women are helped in whatever way possible, for example in getting court interdicts, or tracing relatives able to care for them. The shelter has an ethos of

empowerment, and women have been trained in office skills or sewing. One lady, who came to the shelter after fleeing from a man who knocked her teeth out, broke her nose and jaw, and kicked her so hard in the back that she had to have a kidney removed, said: 'I was a broken person when I came to the shelter, but I have regained my confidence and worked my way to a better life.'

Sinethemba would like to expand and offer the services of a social worker and legal adviser, but funding is a constant battle – just managing to obtain basic supplies such as food and nappies is very difficult. They also need to open a safe house for children, as so many abused and abandoned children are being brought to them.

Newly funded project 2006

GADRA: helping the visually impaired



Thembisa funded GADRA (the Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association) in the 1990s and has done so again following an approach from Pauline Mitchell, the manager, who told us about GADRA's work with visually impaired people. GADRA receives no government subsidy and is totally dependent on donations. Services to those who are visually impaired include Braille classes. One of their pupils had never attended school as her parents thought she would not be able to read or write so why bother? A GADRA minibus collects the students, who cannot afford the taxi fare.

There are also computer classes (using special 'speaking' software) and classes in independent living and helping people make their homes 'blindsafe'. A new project is beekeeping; if this proves viable it will help provide dignity and an income for the participants – so many blind people remain unemployed. GADRA has also started social activities, including bowls and drumming. For the drumming classes, students from Rhodes University who came along to teach the blind participants how to drum soon realized how much the participants were going to teach them!

Taking South Africa by storm

Tonia Cope Bowley, December 2005 / January 2006

For the first time since 1997 we, the Bowley family, visited my homeland. And what a pleasure and surprise it was. Everywhere, and by all sectors, we were made welcome. Everywhere, from poverty stricken people, to those better off, we witnessed the creativity of South Africans.

We could not resist buying quantities of the artistic creations to sell back in the UK – for Thembisa – like these beadwork articles bought on the roadside in Grahamstown.

In the Eastern Cape unemployment runs at 65% with attendant problems. People like

Chris Mann, who originally helped us set up Thembisa, encourages development in a host of ways. Chris sees to it that any projects Thembisa funds in his area through Masikhulisane receive matched funding from the Government's funding pool. These projects include a well-run home for street kids, adult education and an environmental scheme clearing the river mouth of invasive foreign fauna – not only beneficial for the environment but providing much needed employment.



► Proud gardener provides food for the street kids.



► Beadwork for sale along side the road.

Tonia Cope Bowley

David Barrett Bequest

It was with great sadness that I attended the memorial service for David in October. It is only just over a year since his wife Barbara died. Barbara and David were both enthusiastically supported Thembisa since it began. David, a scientist, was a man of many parts, widely travelled and with practical compassion for his fellow South African's in need. To mark and celebrate David's life his family have once again designated Thembisa as the charity for remembrance gifts. Thembisa sincerely thanks the Barrett family for this honour. We express our condolences to family members and close friends. David is sorely missed.

Thembisa walk 2006



Our annual walk on 16 July 2006 was once again blessed with good weather. The hardier participants left Tiddington at 10.45 and walked about 11 miles, while others did a shorter but still very scenic walk in the afternoon. Yet others came just for tea, served in the shade in Stephen and Tonia Bowley's beautiful garden. We then squeezed in the living room for a talk by Tonia, illustrated with slides, on her family's visit to South Africa in December 2005. They were able to visit some of the projects supported by Thembisa (see page X), as well as other projects also aimed at giving people a chance to make something of their lives. Tonia's words and photos reminded us of how fortunate we are both in our privileged lives here, and also in being able to share our material wealth with those who have so little.

The walk raised over £400. Thank you to everyone who came, or walked, or sent a donation.

Books help Thembisa



One of our members who is employed by Oxford University Press (OUP) was involved in an office move and noticed a few years ago that unwanted books were being discarded. She obtained permission to set up a table and offer them to employees in return for a donation to Thembisa. The books are now kept on shelves in a passage where they can be seen by passers-by. Employees who find books that interest them are delighted, and some have taken educational books to donate to their children's schools, so everybody wins! Our Thembisa member sorts them out occasionally and those that have not been taken are sent on to BookAid, a charity which distributes books in the third world.

This is a great example of starting small. Our member had no idea what a successful source of funds this would be – over four years it has raised more than £2500 for Thembisa projects. We are most grateful to the people at OUP who have helped in this endeavour.

Is there anything creative that you could do to raise funds at your workplace or among your circle of friends? We'd be happy to send you a stock of Thembisa newsletters if required!



Our youngest walker, and others, enjoying the sunshine!



Thembisa's upgraded funding policy

This year the Trustees have made funding more efficient. Once a year (around August), the Trustees review all projects and consider new applications and then decide which projects to fund the following year.

Our policy is to take on a strictly limited number of new projects because otherwise

we would be spreading our funding too thinly. Any new projects must be making a difference at grassroots level and we need a link person in South Africa who can vouch for them. This year we have three new projects – Oban beadwork, GADRA, and Sinethemba, all briefly described in this newsletter.

Projects funded since the last newsletter

(includes funding for second half of 2005/6, allocated in March 2006, and first half of 2006/7, allocated in September 2006)

Project Location	Amount
Bonginkosi preschool ^a , Edendale	£7500
Gauteng Peace and Development Foundation – empowerment and training ^b , Gauteng	£4600
African Leadership Development Institute (ALDI) – leadership training, Pietermaritzburg	£2000
Bethesda Foundation – centre for arts education and health, Nieu Bethesda, Eastern Cape	£2000
Masikhulisane Trust – employment creation, Grahamstown	£1800
Sakhumzi orphanage, Cape Town	£900
WARMTH – war against Malnutrition, TB and Hunger, Countrywide	£900
Sinethemba shelter for women, KwaZulu-Natal	£300
GADRA, Grahamstown	£300
Ingelozzi Eyetu – beadwork project, Van Reenen	£300
Total	£20,600

^a Transfer of first instalment of the grant from KOA for rebuilding (see article in this newsletter)

^b Includes sums designated for the specific project by the donors.