



THE THEMBISA TRUST

**Grassroots support
in South Africa**

Newsletter no 29
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**Thembisa has
no political affiliation**

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Dame Janet Suzman

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about us



join us



projects



funding



events

2014 Focus: MNCP

(see p.4-5)



**JOIN
US**

**At the Thembisa Trust
Walk and Barbecue,
Sunday 27th July 2014**

(see p.7 for
more details)



*Dame Janet Suzman,
our Patron, will join
us in the afternoon*

**All profits will go to support MNCP, working to provide hope among
very needy people in squatter camps around Pietermaritzburg**

I want to work

Tonia Cope Bowley, Thembisa Trust Co-founder

South Africa has a huge youth unemployment crisis. With 70% of all those under 35 out of work, it has one of the world's biggest youth unemployment problems. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25015612>

The story of the unemployed is one of enormous frustration. Most unemployed people want to work, but in reality finding work is easier said than done. Many do not have work experience or qualifications. Robbed of their dignity, those with a family to support feel a failure when they return home (again) empty handed.

BUT there are some surprising and positive initiatives springing up from people on the ground and this is where Thembisa's support is invaluable. The examples below are from the 2013 focus projects – iThemba and MNCP.

iThemba, working in KwaZulu-Natal, is enabling the local Mpumuzu (Sweetwaters) community to become self-sufficient through education, empowerment and new skills. A variety of work and job training opportunities are offered.

iThemba focuses on education and on developing the moral fibre of children and young people. They believe that if a new generation can step into adulthood with a high level of education and strong moral convictions, the community of Mpumuzu will experience a much brighter future.

Other opportunities offered through iThemba include skills training for local teachers, and permaculture vegetable gardening for school children and families.

Work amongst the destitute in the Informal Settlements (Shacklands) is a gigantic challenge. How does anyone move beyond such a life? The focus of Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) is especially on children – 'Changing the World one smiling child at a time!'. Take for example Nolwazi Ntuli, an orphan. Her father died when she was still a baby and her mother in 2011. Due to go on to Grade 8 this year, Nolwazi had no-one to support her until MNCP stepped in to cover her education and encourage her in her aim to become a medical doctor. Here she is on her first day at school.

Read more about these projects on pages 4–6.





Why support Thembisa?

We were recently asked why anyone should support Thembisa rather than supporting the projects directly. We're delighted if anyone feels moved to support any of our projects directly! At least two of our projects have their own websites or Facebook pages.

We see our role as two-fold:

- ▶ To raise awareness. Most of our supporters – and that goes for Trustees too! – wouldn't know about these projects if it weren't for Thembisa.
- ▶ To raise funds in the UK. Acting together as the Thembisa community, we have raised much more than would have been achieved through individual donations.

Thembisa can assure you that every penny of your donation goes to meet real needs, and can inform you of progress. We have personal contacts in South Africa who know each project, can verify that things are being properly run and report back. We don't use any donated money for admin

costs – those come out of membership fees (£15 pa), and Thembisa does not employ any staff.

We transfer funds to South Africa once or twice a year as efficiently as possible to minimise bank charges, which could otherwise eat up a large fraction of smaller individually given donations.

We're very aware of needing to allocate funds responsibly. Circumstances sometimes change (e.g. a project is able to generate their own support, or closes) and projects are no longer funded.

The projects we support all require support from elsewhere as well, but some have told us that they may have folded, or gone without vital equipment, had it not been for a well-timed Thembisa grant. Typical of the 'thank yous' we receive is this one from iThemba recently:

"We wanted to send a huge thank you for the generous donation you recently made for the community development work that we are doing here in South Africa. We feel extremely honoured to have partners like you in another country who are passionate about the work that we do."

Something to sing about!

Thembisa's funds received welcome boosts over the past year thanks to original ideas from supporters.

Bill Henderson, a musician and music/singing teacher based near Inverness in Scotland, arranged a 'Big Sing' to teach people how to sing the South African national anthem 'Nkosi Sikelele' iAfrika' on 15 December, shortly after the death of Nelson Mandela, when South Africa was very much in the news. Well over 100 people participated and £224.38 was raised. What great thinking – thank you, Bill!

Tonia Cope Bowley had a 'big birthday' and asked for donations to Thembisa rather

than gifts. To make it easy for people, she set up a Virgin Money Giving page and raised over £1,200!

We are also extremely grateful to Bernwode News for a grant of £1,000 to MNCP in 2013.

Car boot sale

We are planning to hold a car boot sale on **Sunday 25 May 2014** to raise funds for Thembisa. If you have good-quality items likely to sell, and live in Oxford (or are able to deliver them to Oxford), or if you can help on the day, please phone **01865 766117**. NO clothes or books please!



Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP)



► Sunday afternoon classes held by MNCP to teach the children basic lifeskills and provide them with a drink and snack.

Changing the world one smiling child at a time is the motto of Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP), working in two Pietermaritzburg informal settlements (squatter camps) – Jika Joe and Matison. The people living in these camps have almost nothing and the MNCP volunteers are confronted daily by examples of destitution and desperation. Sandra Pillay, MNCP's fund raiser, has kept us regularly updated on cases where MNCP have been able to provide help and hope. (Until recently Sandra was the only paid staff member, but they have now employed a community worker as the needs for help are so great.)



► Olwethu

9-year-old Olwethu came to MNCP in a state of neglect. Abandoned at the age of 10 months by her mother, a prostitute, Olwethu subsequently shuttled between homes before being reclaimed by her mother, who sent her out to beg in the streets and beat her up if she did not collect enough money. When found by MNCP she was covered in a dirty rag to keep her warm and living with her



unemployed father, sick grandmother and two siblings in a home with no food, beds or even mattresses. MNCP volunteers bathed and clothed Olwethu and have enrolled her in school this year.

Olwethu and her siblings, like so many children in these settlements, don't have birth certificates – essential in order to enroll at school. MNCP makes representations to the School Principals to get children enrolled – believing that education is essential to offer the children a brighter future and a way out of the cycle of poverty.

Where there is no food in the home MNCP also provides basic food hampers so that the children can have something to eat before attending school, and as a result focus much better on their lessons.

MNCP often helps children get medical attention, or provides the taxi fare so their parents can get them to the doctor. In November they took a little two-year-old girl, Ntokozo, to hospital because her left leg was badly burnt, with huge oozing blisters, as a result of hot liquid spilling from a cooking pot.

Some basic costs of MNCP's work are as follows (approx. exchange rate £1= R18):

- ▶ School uniform (includes shoes, bag, raincoat) – R500 per child
- ▶ Basic stationery kit – R40 per child
- ▶ Basic food hamper so that children can have some food to eat before going to school – R100 per month
- ▶ Basic provision to establish a food garden (a hoe, seeds for a veg garden, and seedlings) – R82
- ▶ Cold drinks for all the children on a Sunday afternoon – R114
- ▶ Snacks served to 350 children on a Sunday afternoon – R500 or R1.50 per child.

At Christmas, MNCP gave over 1,000 children and some 150 adults a wonderful treat. Words cannot express the joy and excitement and wonderful atmosphere that prevailed.

Cover photo: For some residents, cabbages donated by a kind farmer meant they did not have to go to bed hungry.

▶ MNCP Christmas party 2013



▶ Ntokozo





iThemba community projects

iThemba Community Projects aim to provide training in the squatter camps of Mpumzuza in KwaZulu-Natal in order to break the cycles of abuse, poverty, and HIV/AIDS.

Life skills classes

iThemba teaches lifeskills classes, with topics ranging from time management to issues like abuse, in partnership with 10 schools to over 500 pupils. In Mpumzuza, the HIV infection rate is almost 50% (the highest in the world). iThemba staff seek to help teens make wise life choices. Studies have shown that relationships with good role models play a significant part helping children overcome challenging life situations. That is why iThemba staff don't see their job as ending when class is over. Through after-school sports and home visits, positive relationships are built with students.

Support to crèches

Investment in early childhood education gives the highest rates of return to education, yet four out of five children in South Africa never attend pre-school. iThemba provides training, resources and support to crèches – both to teachers and parents, believing that 'Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.'



► *iThemba mentors act as role models.*



► *Gardens in the schools are continuing to flourish. Many gardeners are able to save their seeds to grow heirloom vegetables from seed in the spring.*

New community centre

iThemba is building a new community centre which will house a pre-school crèche and other facilities, on land donated by a local chief. Funders, businesses, engineers and volunteers have all helped. The building uses green 'rammed earth' technology, which uses soil from the building site to make the 'concrete' mixture for the walls. This saves money and is more environmentally sustainable.

► *Construction of the new centre in progress.*

Projects update



The **Bonginkosi self-help project** volunteers continue to support needs in Sweetwaters – a very impoverished semi rural area of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. Activities include crocheted blankets, candle-making, embroidery, and machine sewing – in particular quilts from scraps, school uniforms and clothes for the family.

The group also subsidises school fees and distributes food and goods.

The **Chishawasha orphans' project** in Zimbabwe continues to provide support to young people orphaned by AIDS. A football club is run for the boys. Others are helped with medical expenses.



New Project NUHORUS Niche-Unity Hands On Rural Unification Support

Small-scale farmers in rural areas in South Africa struggle to survive. NUHORUS aims to promote sustainable resource use by these communities, by encouraging sustainable ecological farming practices, farm infrastructure support and education/knowledge sharing. This should increase the resilience of farming communities in a context of increasing climatic and resource stress. Skills acquired by the farmers who are helped will be transferred to other members of the community through mentorship programmes.

NUHORUS has sent us reports on farmers helped in six rural communities in the Eden district of the Western Cape. Items such as seed, fencing, a rain water tank, breeding rams, ducks, or the fees for a cheese-making course have been provided. The costs were less than £300 in each case but the difference to the farmers concerned and their dependants is massive!

JOIN US Walk and Barbecue, Sunday 27th July 2014

- ▶ Long walk starts at 10:00am in Chilterns. Pub stop for lunch.
- ▶ Short walk starts at 3:00pm at Tiddington Village Hall, OX9 1AA
- ▶ Both walks finish at Ferndale, with light refreshments.
- ▶ Contact: sbowleypc@aol.com for final walk details.
- ▶ Barbecue from 4:30 to 8:00pm at Ferndale, Albury View, Tiddington.
- ▶ Barbecue tickets £12, children under 10 £6. Food and soft drinks provided; beer and wine and other items for sale. For catering, please RSVP: contact@thembisatrust.org or phone 01865 766117
- ▶ Virgin money giving link: see p.8





Project funding April'13 – March'14

Project / Organisation	Location	Amount
Masikhulisane Trust Alleviation of poverty through job creation Pre School Places ^a For needy children	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£1,500
Bonginkosi Self-help Project Blanket making skills support HIV Orphans	Sweetwaters, KwaZulu-Natal	£1,500
Chishawasha Orphans Includes provision of care and teaching life skills	Zimbabwe	£1,250
Khazimula Children's Project Shelter and schooling for vulnerable children.	Lidgetton, KwaZulu-Natal	£1,000
iThemba Community Projects ^b Life training, crèches, preschools, sustainable nutrition, employment opportunities	Mpumuzi, KwaZulu-Natal	£2,800
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) ^b Supporting vulnerable children in two informal settlements	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal	£4,050
NUHORUS Promoting sustainable resource use by farmers in rural communities	Western Cape	£1,000
	Total	£13,100

a The Pre-school Places project is now funded through Masikhulisane

b Included donations ear-marked for these projects

A REMINDER Admin funds come from membership dues (£15 p.a).
Donations are passed on in their entirety to projects.

Thembisa is now on Facebook



We joined the social media revolution and now have a Facebook page. Search for Thembisa Trust. Please 'like' us so that we can increase awareness of what we do!



moneygiving

Thembisa Trust's annual Walk and Barbecue is posted on the Thembisa's Virgin Money Giving page. Go to: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/thembisatrust> Click on 'Events' for information or to donate online. Or, to set up your own sponsorship page for the walk, click on 'Start fundraising'. Sponsors can donate online and VMG sends the money to Thembisa.

Raise funds when shopping online

Easyfundraising has made it even easier to raise money for Thembisa at no cost to you. Visit <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>, put 'Thembisa Trust' in the search box, and register. Just press the Easyfundraising button which will be added to the top of your screen whenever you buy something online at any of 2,000+ registered retailers, and the retailer will make a donation to Thembisa. We've raised £130 so far at no cost to us!

Email addresses

Please send your email address to contact@thembisatrust.org (together with your own name!). You will only receive occasional relevant news to keep you up-to-date. Your email will not be passed to any third party.