



THE THEMBISA TRUST

**Grassroots support
in South Africa**

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**Thembisa has
no political affiliation**

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funding



events



Sweetwaters relief



MNCP a lighthouse for those in need

**Happy 90th birthday Archbishop Desmond Tutu!
Thank you for being our Patron since 1999!**

Letter from our co-founder

Tonia Cope Bowley,
ThembisaTrust Co-Founder



Hello friends of Thembisa.

News reports worldwide focus almost entirely on the negative. Somewhere deep inside a panic button is pushed. But, sometimes panic propels positive energy into appropriate action.

My mother was a born storyteller. I vividly recall her account of a true story about a family travelling on an ocean liner. The weather glorious, the ocean calm. Lunch time: teenage Johnny was nowhere to be seen. Then a friend recalled he'd seen Johnny at the back of ship balancing on the railings. PANIC! The captain agreed to turn the ship around and retrace the route they'd sailed. But, he cautioned, the likelihood of finding Johnny is slim. The water is icy cold and his chance of survival low. Slowly the ship turned through 180 degrees. Everyone crowded onto the front observation deck, binoculars trained on the sea. Hours later, just when the captain was on the verge of abandoning the search, a cry went up 'I see him'.

After the initial shock of plunging into the ocean Johnny had recalled his mother telling him 'No matter what happens, never panic.' With that in mind, Johnny kept moving, conserving energy by slow doggy paddling. Hope that he would be found kept him going. He would never give up.

Johnny's example has often kept me moving forwards in times of deep and dangerous valleys of life. So often things seem at their worst just before they get better. The darkest hour is just before the dawn.

Today, in the wake of the jailing of former South African President Jacob Zuma, in mid-July, and the well organised plan to topple the government that failed, that led to needless tragedy, I am inspired by many examples of perseverance and positive action. Thousands of South Africans of every race, creed and age came together to clean up the mess and support each other. Emergency food appeal schemes were set up to feed the millions who had no prospect of getting food (see page 3).

President Ramaphosa's steps to stamp out corruption, as well as the example of the young with visions of hope and healing for the country, inspire me. Do watch the Hope to Heal video: <https://youtu.be/phHUGuwtHeY>.

Lastly, I share the outstanding example of Mark, who watched his furniture store in KZN going up in flames. Broken-hearted, he had no idea where to start, but finally concluded not to harbour blame but to seek God's wisdom. Mark decided to build up from the ashes, to provide employment for his staff and hope for his customers. Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWDEtlxW6M>. As Mark concluded: Let peace triumph.

No one can solve the world's problems but we can all do something for some. So, if you have a heart for Africa please join Thembisa in contributing what you can to support those in dire need in Southern Africa. Thank you.

Project update



Update on the emergency food appeal for KwaZulu-Natal

Thembisa launched a special appeal to help African Enterprise (AE) get food to people in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, in the aftermath of the looting and violence in South Africa from 9–17 July. Thousands lost their livelihoods and possessions.

AE immediately swung into action, partnering with other groups. Theuns Pauw, the CEO of AE, was on a committee coordinating national food relief. The first consignment of basic foodstuffs was enough to feed over 4000 families for two weeks in four KwaZulu-Natal districts. AE also took to the streets in various clean-up operations around Pietermaritzburg.

Our campaign raised **£1750** – thank you to those who donated. The first phase of the



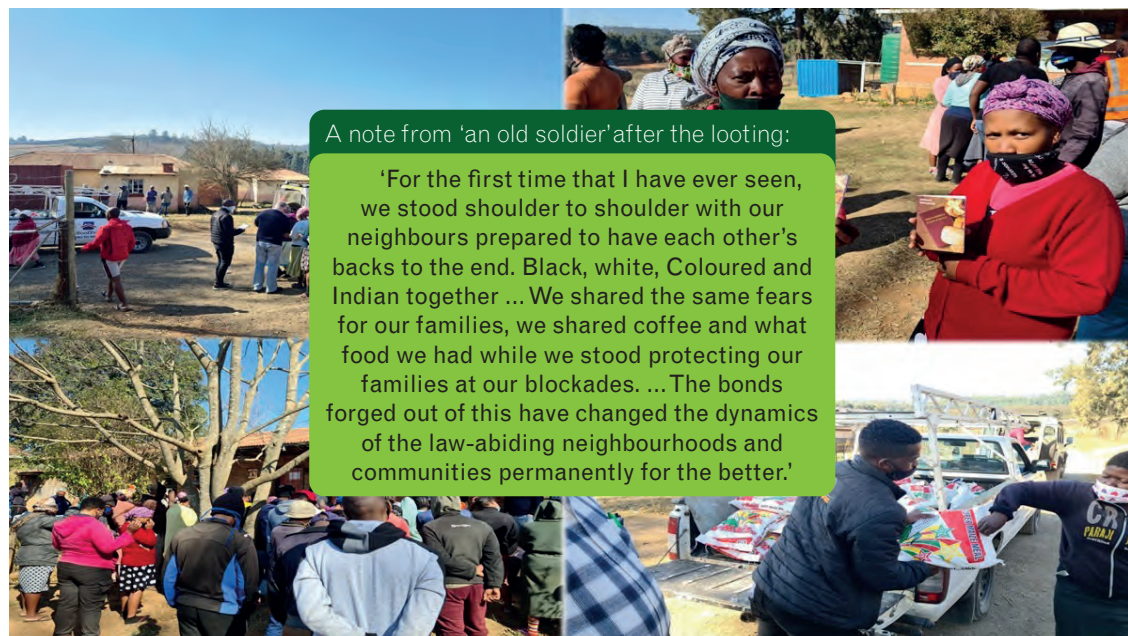
relief effort – emergency food – is now completed, and the next two – trauma and spiritual care, and community upliftment (e.g. training in sustainable farming and entrepreneurship –) are ongoing.

If you donate through the Thembisa website and want your money to go specifically to AE, please let us know by email (contact@thembisatrust.org). Cheques are also welcome!

Examples of what our help provided

£5 fed a family of four for 5 days,

£25 fed a family of four for a month.



A note from 'an old soldier' after the looting:

'For the first time that I have ever seen, we stood shoulder to shoulder with our neighbours prepared to have each other's backs to the end. Black, white, Coloured and Indian together ... We shared the same fears for our families, we shared coffee and what food we had while we stood protecting our families at our blockades. ... The bonds forged out of this have changed the dynamics of the law-abiding neighbourhoods and communities permanently for the better.'



Project update

Food relief in Sweetwaters



Colourfully dressed ladies welcome the arrival of food relief in Sweetwaters.



With her baby on her back, this mother's hands are free to carry her food parcel.

None of the residents in the very poor area of Sweetwaters are employed. The Bonginkosi Self-help project aims to help people attain sustainable livelihoods through promoting micro-businesses such as sewing and vegetable growing. When Covid-19 arrived, Sarah Dottridge received a letter saying 'Please help us. We are starving' – the first time she has ever received a begging letter like this. Not only have people lost meagre incomes, but food has also gone up in price. The project now supplies packs of basic foodstuffs to 130 members of the self-help project, feeding a total of about 700 people.

The violence in July resulted in the Bonginkosi members being stuck in Sweetwaters, unable to get into town and with no food getting through to the corner shops where they live. Bonginkosi volunteers (and other groups too) decided they had no choice but to go in despite the tension and danger from thugs, and they took in 3 trucks fully laden with food. The joy and relief on people's faces was quite a sight.

Carol Cassidy recently reported: **'We're just safely back now from Sweetwaters. Everyone again received a huge parcel of food and we took my vehicle loaded up with fabric donated for those who sew. The ladies were so appreciative. There was an upbeat and jubilant spirit. It's a blessing to be a beacon of hope in these times.'**

Cross Over: challenges and outreach <https://www.crossoverzim.com/>

Cross Over provides holistic, nurturing education to vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. In the past 18 months successive lockdowns have greatly disrupted education. While the school was closed the mentors reached out to children within their communities, most of whom are not Cross Over students, to provide ongoing maths and language tuition. They did this discreetly and with diligent attention to Covid measures.

The school has opened intermittently (as of August 2021, it is closed), but had to put many Covid prevention measures in place. The team were very happy that most students returned for the first term of 2021. The risk of losing students during long breaks, especially girls, is huge.

Families have fallen on harder times, and Cross Over has used some Thembisa funds to provide food packs for those in greatest need. Children coming to school on empty stomachs cannot engage with their learning.

The Cross Over team has used the time in lockdown to think and plan strategically. They are trying to come up with an offline mechanism to reach and teach students who have limited or no access to the internet. They are also planning how Cross Over could become a training and resourcing ministry able to serve many different organisations

working with vulnerable children and education, rather than focusing on developing one model station and trying to start others.

The students' home circumstances can be tragic. Rodwell (a pseudonym), 9 years old, lost his mother. During her illness, Rodwell was getting up to feed and change the baby at night and helping his dad with household chores. Rodwell's mentor noticed that he was exhausted at school. The mentor team set up support systems for him, helped him to navigate through his circumstances, and provided food aid. One day, during the morning meeting (a key part of Cross Over routines that enables students to settle before beginning learning activities), Rodwell asked 'How is it school is much more fun than being home?' Being at school was the only enjoyable thing for him in this difficult time.



Tippy taps, innovative hand washing station.

Socially distanced learning. 5



MNCP has its own Community Centre



BEFORE



AFTER

In May 2021 we received this message from Sandra Pillay, MNCP ((Mama Ntombi's Community Project) manager: 'Construction of our lovely building started in November 2020. We are so thankful for the bequest from Stephen Bowley which enabled us to move to our new premises. Funds from Thembisa enabled us to install two water tanks, put up security burglar bars, paint the new building, and concrete the external area. The building is now in use, although lots of finishing touches remain, such as the need for curtains to improve the acoustics. The next part of the dream is to equip the building with computers, so that children can learn IT skills essential to helping them get on in life.'

For several years Thembisa has supported MNCP as its key project. Thembisa was set up specifically to enable grassroots projects get off the ground – those too small to attract funding from bigger charities like Oxfam. MNCP is the brainchild of Paster Chris Pillay, who himself was denied opportunities to fulfil his dreams.

MNCP has continued helping the desperately poor families in the squatter camps of Ezinketheni and Jika Joe through successive lockdowns due to Covid-19. Thankfully Sandra, her colleagues, and the new building, remained safe during the violence in KwaZulu-Natal.



The Thembisa-funded watertanks provided the water for the builders to complete the cement floor.



A donation received from a lady in lieu of Christmas gifts to her grandchildren will be used to tile the unpainted section in the new kitchen and serving area.

Recent activities

- Providing a cooked meal (often the only meal) to hundreds of children every day.
- A workshop with teenagers discussing 'High School dropouts'. Many children drop out of school due to poverty – orphaned children living with aged grandmothers, children having to walk long distances to school, lack of resources to do assignments, etc.



- A Social Worker meeting with girls aged 15–19, to discuss female development, personal hygiene, and peer pressure. The girls received a goodie bag that included sanitary pads. Further workshops are planned for teenage boys and girls. (Editor's note: other projects have commented to us how heart-breaking it is to see teenagers ignorant of the facts of life or their choices.)
- Supporting 15-year-old Sibahle, left all alone when his mother died. MNCP provides a grocery hamper every month and has asked a social worker to help reinstate his Child Support Grant (complicated, as it cannot be paid directly to a minor). MNCP will buy his school uniform so that he can feel good about having the proper clothes.
- Provision of food parcels to 28 destitute families and encouraging them to start projects of their own (vegetable gardens, baking, sewing) so that, at the end of the year, help can be given to others.



- When Gogo Mkhize died at home, it was Solomon (MNCP worker) who called the paramedics and arranged her funeral. The MNCP team will really miss Gogo Mkhize, who always had a smile despite her tough circumstances.
- Distribution of blankets, handwarmers, beanies and toys at a primary school with children from three neighbouring Informal Settlements. It was heart-breaking to see how threadbare some of their clothes were, but MNCP was able to wrap them up in blankets of love.



This is what your donation can buy

- £5 A nutritious breakfast for 20 preschool children.
- £10 Bread and milk for a granny with four orphaned children for a week.
- £25 Petrol for a month to enable MNCP to go in and out of Ezinketheni.
- £50 A food parcel for a granny and four orphaned children for a month.



Chishawasha orphans' project



Maggie Norton continues to use funds from Thembisa to support extremely vulnerable families in Zimbabwe with medical fees, school uniforms, school fees, and emergency food parcels. The Perekedza Orphans' Club provides food parcels monthly and brings joy to these children, who have so little, at occasions like the Christmas party. Some



Children will walk for over 2 hours to carry their food pack which weighs more than they do.

Happiness is ... a hot dog and gifts at the Christmas party.

months have been missed due to lockdown but a shelter has now been built where meetings can take place.

The young man with terrible infected wounds (mentioned last year) had an operation paid for by two Thembisa supporters and has made a slow but good recovery.

iThemba: food gardens bring hope <https://ithembaprojects.com/>

Stu Walker wrote to thank us for funds sent for emergency food supplies during Covid:



“Amongst the soaring unemployment, elderly dying from Covid and much anxiety, we have been witness to so much hope. All of you are part of bringing this hope, in a time when most can only see despair.

We have seen so much progress in how people have helped themselves. It has been during a pandemic when we have seen the biggest move towards sustainability and less dependency. Thembisa's donations have helped us facilitate many more households to start their own food gardens, and to see a way they can help themselves not just now but in the months and years ahead.

So much more food resilience, so much more sustainability and so many households who have a more sustainable means of food in their time of crisis.”

New Project

Food 4 Futures

Grahamstown, now named Makhanda, has an unemployment rate of over 55%, and over 65% among 18- to 35-year-olds. Each employed person supports 6 to 8 additional people. In 2018 a destitute man looking for work knocked on Mary Birt's door. Mary did not have a job for him but gave him a parcel of food. She invited him to return the next week and F4F was born. Initially based at Mary's home, F4F now uses the St John's Ambulance premises in the city centre to receive the bulk orders and pack and distribute the food parcels.

F4F distribute approximately 150 food parcels every second week. They also make bulk donations to a shelter run by a local

woman in the township who takes in abandoned children, and to one of more than 20 soup kitchens in Grahamstown. F4F are not funded by the government, and they rely on donations to keep going. The work is done by volunteers.

During the initial Covid 19 lockdown period in South Africa, F4F received a donation from the Church of England in South Africa, and distributed 580 food parcels each distribution day. When those funds dried up, they had to cut that number to 150 parcels. Dozens of men and women arrive each distribution day hoping to get onto the list of recipients, and are provided with peanut butter sandwiches – a drop in the bucket of need, but better than nothing.

<https://www.food4futures.co.za/>



Giving thanks for Chris Mann

Thembisa gives thanks for the life of Chris Mann, who died of cancer on 10 March 2021. Chris, Thembisa's chief advisor and wise counsellor since its founding, is sorely missed.

Stephen and Tonia met Chris in 1988. Chris, then Administrator of The Valley Trust, a centre for health promotion in KwaZulu-Natal, enthusiastically backed their idea of setting up a Trust to support grassroots projects. Chris provided Thembisa with its first two projects: a water tank for a remote school and building of a classroom in another school.

Chris, retired Professor of English at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, poet and troubadour, was born in Port Elizabeth. He worked in rural development and poverty alleviation projects,

such as low-cost water-supply and small-scale agriculture; taught English in a rural school; lectured in English at Rhodes University; and worked in teacher development and job creation. Chris combined his compassion with practical action, serving on the board of several trusts. Of these, the Masikhulisane Trust, focusing on job creation and educational initiatives, was supported by Thembisa.

Chris had a BA from Wits in English and Philosophy, an MA from the School of Oriental and African Languages (London) in African Oral Literature, and an MA from Oxford in English Language and Literature. Chris was a gifted musician, poet, songwriter and author of numerous books. His books, illustrated by his wife, Julia Skeen, are unique treasures. He performed his works in various locations, often accompanied by his own guitar playing. We are ever grateful for Chris's contribution to Thembisa and extend our heartfelt sympathy to Julia and to his family.





Thembisa welcomes ...



We're delighted to welcome as a new Thembisa Trustee **Caroline Mathew**. She brings with her IT and business knowledge. Caroline and her husband John have been long-time supporters of the Trust, and both helped us think through and implement our new card and gift sales initiative. In South Africa Caroline devoted much energy to helping disadvantaged individuals, for example by tutoring students and helping a Zimbabwean family to sell their craft wares. Caroline spends part of the year in South Africa and gives us first-hand feedback.

Getting us onto social media was the work of our brilliant volunteer, **Ariya Nair**. In addition to her social media skills, Ariya has qualifications in the performing arts and in scriptwriting, and works for a local theatre company in Oxford. Ariya has a real heart for those who are struggling financially or emotionally. In 2019, as a volunteer for East African Playgrounds, she helped to build a playground from scratch in Uganda. Ariya has inspired us all with her enthusiasm, energy, and positive outlook. Ariya is working on a promotional video for Thembisa.

Thembisa cards and gifts

You can now buy attractive greeting cards, blank inside and with photos mainly from nature, to raise funds for and awareness of Thembisa. We are also trying out an online market for small crafts made by people in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The cards and gifts are currently available on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/thembisatrustcards>) and instagram. We are setting up a dedicated sales website, with a link on the Thembisa website once it is ready. You can also order cards from us (see address on front cover). Cards cost £2 each, £10 for 6 cards, plus £1.20 for delivery in the UK (up to 6 cards).



Project funding April 2019 – June 2020

In early 2020 Thembisa launched a special appeal for emergency food aid to help people in South Africa and Zimbabwe who were going hungry because their meagre incomes had disappeared due to the COVID-19 pandemic. THANK YOU so much to you, our generous supporters, who enabled us to send nearly £20,000 since May 2020 – used primarily for food relief but also for essential items such as medicine and keeping children's schooling going under very difficult conditions.

Essential aid still accounts for the bulk of our projects' outgoings, with successive waves of COVID-19 still affecting both countries. As you can see on page 3, we have launched another special appeal. We long for the time when our projects can focus again on their upliftment and enrichment programmes.

The 2019/20 figures below include sums already disbursed before the COVID-19 appeal. Sums donated after 1 April 2021 will be shown in the 2021/22 figures.

Project / Organisation	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP)^a Supporting the community in two informal settlements	£9050	£5400	£14,450
Sweetwaters Bonginkosi Self-help Project Income-generating projects, help as needed	£1200	£2900	£4100
AE feeding programme^{a,b} COVID-19 emergency aid, and iThembalomntwana pre-school^b Educational programme	£1200	£2000	£3200
iThemba Community Projects Community upliftment programmes	—	£2400	£2400
Masikhulisane Trust Supporting educational projects and job creation	£1200	—	£1200
Grahamstown Cathedral feeding scheme Emergency feeding scheme	—	£500	£500
Chishawasha Orphans Includes provision of care and teaching life skills	£350	£3300	£3650
Cross Over Educational programme	£1203	£2906	£4109
Total	£14,203	£19,406	£33,609

^a Includes earmarked donations

^b Donations were split between these two projects.

A small number of our supporters earmark part of their donations to be used for admin funds. All other donations are passed on in their entirety to projects.

Thank you for walking this road with us. It will make such a massive difference to so many families. Most importantly it will provide long term sustainable food solutions.

Stu Walker, iThemba projects

Letter from the Chair

Frank Adam

Dear friends and supporters of Thembisa
Desmond Tutu reportedly said 'Hope is being able to see there is light despite all of the darkness.'

On behalf of the many that have benefitted from your support during the darkness of the past 18 months I thank you for holding out hope to so many impoverished people. It is with gratitude that I recall the amazing work of the volunteers and the difference made in the projects we supported recently. May I encourage you to continue to hold out hope in whatever way you can.

May you enjoy good health and may all go well with you.



Garden party/braai

We regret cancelling the annual social and fund-raising braai/garden party on 26 September. Due to Covid and logistical issues this is postponed to summer 2022. We look forward to seeing you then. Meanwhile stay safe. And do consider sending a donation to enable Thembisa to continue supporting projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Donations can be made via the Donate button on our website (www.thembisatrust.org) or by cheque to The Thembisa Trust, 34 Trinity Road, Oxford OX3 8LQ.

Find Thembisa on twitter and Instagram!

twitter and Instagram are the preferred means of communication for millennials. We are thrilled that Thembisa is now on both of them! We hope that this will encourage more young people to get involved – do let your friends in their teens and twenties, know! These platforms also mean we can get updated information out quickly.

If you use twitter and Instagram, please search for and follow 'The Thembisa Trust'. Or find us online at: <https://twitter.com/thembisatrust>
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/thembisatrust/>

Ways to donate

You can donate via:

- the **donation form** enclosed
- the **Thembisa Trust website**:
thembisatrust.org

You can also contribute via



Amazon Smile (easyfundraising replacement). If you're ordering items on-line via Amazon, make full use of this opportunity to support Thembisa at no cost. Search for 'Amazon smile' or type 'smile.amazon.co.uk' and follow the instructions to register as a supporter of 'The Thembisa Trust'.

