



THE THEMBISA TRUST

Grassroots support
in South Africa

Newsletter no 25
Spring 2010

Thembisa has
no political affiliation

34 Trinity Rd,
Oxford, OX3 8LQ

www.thembisatrust.org

contact@thembisatrust.org

Patron:

Desmond M Tutu,
Archbishop Emeritus

Chair:

Stephen Bowley

Trustees:

Frank Adam, Edward Andrews,
Peter Braithwaite, Stephen Bowley,
Tonia Cope Bowley, Jenny Camons,
Liz Carmichael, Grace Townshend

Treasurer and Administrator:

Peter Braithwaite
IT support: Charles Rowe

Newsletter editor:

Grace Townshend

Registered Charity No: 801978



about us



join us



projects



funding



events

World Cup Focus Project



Preschool places See page 3

With the World Cup being held in South Africa, Thembisa has set a new challenge for the year. In addition to funding our regular projects, we're aiming to raise at least £2500 to provide preschool places for needy children aged 2-5 years in the Grahamstown area (see page 3).



2010 Events

Thembisa car boot sale – Sunday 30th May 2010

World Cup Braai – Sunday 11th July 2010

(see page 7)

The Baobab dream

Tonia Cope Bowley, Thembisa Trust Co-founder

To understand the dream and what it means we need to understand the Baobab Tree. This strange looking tree, indigenous to Africa, Madagascar and Australia, is called by some the Tree of Life. To others it is known as the 'upside down tree' after its bare root-like branches in winter.

The Baobab is drought resistant and uniquely *useful all its parts*. It is capable of providing shelter, food and water for animals and humans. The cork-like bark is fire resistant and is used for cloth and rope. The leaves are used for condiments and medicines. The edible fruit is rich in vitamin C. The tree is capable of storing hundreds of litres of water and is tapped in dry periods.

Slow growth

Baobabs grow slowly and their survival is precarious. If a 3 year old pot-grown seedling was transplanted in the wild it could be stamped out unintentionally by an elephant's footfall. However, mature trees can grow 20 metres high and live to 3,000 years.

The dream and what it means

In its infancy Thembisa took up the hunt for a name and symbol to get across the meaning of the originators' dreams. The Zulu word *Thembisa* meaning '*to hold out hope*' matched the dream of holding out hope to those struggling at the grass roots in Southern Africa. Finding an emblem to signify this was a bigger challenge. Eventually the idea of a tree, rooted in South Africa and spreading its branches throughout Africa, emerged. The Baobab, useful all its parts, was the perfect image reflecting the Trust's aspirations. Hence Thembisa's logo!

Last year, at 21, we celebrated a rite of passage in Thembisa's life. The elephant's exterminating footfall has been avoided. But the road ahead is long. The grassroots need is vast. Thembisa longs to better address these needs. To do this we need baobab-like stability and growth involving current and new members. Do get in touch if you can help in any way – especially if you have any fund-raising ideas. The office can back you up by supplying Thembisa literature. And oh yes, please support the fundraising events this year (see page 7).



2010 World Cup Focus Project



Preschool places for needy children

Poverty and AIDS mean that the number of orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa is increasing. Early childhood stimulation plays a key role in developing people's full potential, but the government cannot provide all the funding needed. Registered community preschools receive some subsidy but still have to charge fees to cover their costs. The fees are only about R100 (£8) per month, but are still out of reach of many families – especially because the mother is often either terminally ill or has died, the father is absent and the grandmother or another relative is taking care of the child.

The Centre for Social Development (CSD), attached to Rhodes University in Grahamstown, promotes early childhood development and community development in disadvantaged areas. The CSD has established preschools, which provide educational stimulation, socialisation benefits, and physical benefits, as the

children receive two nutritious meals a day.

The children who would benefit most from attending preschools are identified by staff of the Grahamstown Hospice, which works with children affected by AIDS and terminal illnesses in their families, and by the CSD's own workers, who are based in particular communities and know the children and families well.

The annual cost to fund each place at a preschool is about £100, including all the administration costs. We are aiming to raise at least £2500, which would benefit 25 children. This project has been recommended to us by Chris Mann, Thembisa's local 'man on the ground'. Most of us reading this newsletter probably had a good start in life and lots of support from people around us. Let's help as many of these needy children as possible!

Please support our events (page 7) or send a donation, marked 'Preschool places'.





Feedback Alexandria Haven

21st Birthday Fundraising

Our aim in 2009 was to raise £10,000 for additional accommodation at the Alexandria Haven, an orphanage in the Eastern Cape. Instead, £15,500 was raised through a number of contributions. Thanks to everyone who made this possible. This is how Thembisa did it:

► **A Charity dinner** at the Belfry Hotel near Oxford on 23 May. Gary Kirsten, former top scoring South African batsman, now coach of the Indian cricket team, gave an entertaining talk on his experiences in international sport. Deborah, his wife, added amusing anecdotes. A raffle and auction topped up the takings.

► **The Charity Twenty 20 cricket match** followed two days later at Tiddington Cricket Club. Gary held a coaching surgery in the morning then captained the winning side, Tiddington, against an Oxford University Club Cricket Club side.

► Proceeds from **a Charity Lapathon** by a school near Perth, Australia. In the atmosphere of a recession even meeting our target looked like a distant dream. But what we did not know was that Maggie Dunnill, formerly of Oxford and a friend of the Bowleys, was keeping note of

Thembisa on the Internet. Maggie proposed that Thembisa be the recipient of her school's 2009 Lapathon. They raised well over £9000!

Maggie writes: "It has been a wonderful privilege to join in this Thembisa venture. Every child should have a decent bed to sleep in, and enough food. We are delighted to know that we can make a difference to the world even if only in a small way. In our school we have many Sudanese refugees, and the children of Vietnamese Boat People, so we are very conscious of our lives of luxury here in contrast to the needs of so many."

► **Oxford Cherwell schoolboys**, Weiyao Li and William Glennerster, as part of their GCSE Active Citizenship Project, needed to support a charity. They discovered Thembisa through the school's charity booklet. After extensive research they



► *Gary and Debbie Kirsten at the charity dinner with Tonia and Stephen Bowley, co-founders of Thembisa.*





projects

held two assemblies when they told their school about Thembisa, and about the Haven Project. William also went on a sponsored 16-hour fast. Thembisa says: 'Congratulations Weiyao and William. We are proud of you and grateful for the £145.22 you raised.'

- **2009 Charity Walk** Once again we had lovely weather for our two walks on 6 September 2009. We raised nearly £1000 to add to the funds for The Haven.
- **Donations** Many sent donations. Of note was a donation of £80 to mark the 80th birthday of the donor's cousin.

Alexandria Haven – building progress

The Alexandria Haven is an informal orphanage in the Eastern Cape that houses more than 40 children in one three-bed roomed bungalow. The plan was to ensure the safety of the children by building a secure wall around the property and to build several wooden chalets, each housing six children and an adult.

Plans have changed slightly, as is often the case in Africa! Michael Allen, our contact person, reports: 'I recently had meetings with representatives of the Government, which have necessitated a slight change of plan. Instead of building log cabins, which require ongoing maintenance, it has been suggested that we build proper brick and mortar structures. If the authorities approve our designs, we can apply for a reimbursement of 80%, which will put us in good stead to start another building with little need to raise too much more money.'

'In the meantime the children are now at last safe. We have built a high wall around the property to keep both the children 'in' and baddies 'out' (Editor's note: Michael had previously reported that some adults in the area would come around when drunk and beat up children.) This enclosure has depleted our coffers, but we have not used your donation for this project. It looks as if a local radio station may give us a big donation – if so, we will have enough money to build the first house. In the meantime I have been told that an AIDS clinic will also be built on the property shortly.'



► *Charity Lapathon... Perth schoolchildren running to raise money for The Haven.*



► *The new wall around The Haven to keep the children safe.*

Encouraging developments at Bethesda

The Bethesda Foundation at Nieu-Bethesda in the Karoo has changed the lives of some of the most disadvantaged people in South Africa through its various training and income-generating programmes. Jeni Couzyn, Director, recently wrote as follows:

'Thank you for another wonderful grant to the Bethesda Foundation. It arrived when we had about R500 (£40) in the bank.

'Sandra Sweers, our lead artist whom you have supported since she started work at the Centre, is now trainer of all the other artists, and an inspiration to everyone. Last year we had a very successful exhibition at the Hout Bay gallery. We hung about twenty large quilts and about forty lino prints. For twelve months, we paid a monthly stipend of R1000 (about £80) each to 22 artists.

'We also improved our restaurant and tourist accommodation which the participants are now running almost independently – managing internet bookings, stocktaking, buying food, cooking and serving it in the restaurant, and keeping control of all incoming money! This year we had to stop paying stipends as we ran out of money, which reduced the number of artists and kitchen staff to fifteen. But that



has launched the Centre into a new phase – where people are taking much more responsibility.

'We had a major campaign last year to stop all drinking. Now each Monday we have a "clean" meeting, AA style. The dop system left a terrible legacy of alcoholism in the coloured communities, and last year we decided to tackle it head on. This policy is bearing fruit.' (Editor's note: In the 'dop' system, coloured farm workers were paid part of their wages in alcohol.)

Job creation via Masikhulisane

Masikhulisane acts as an 'umbrella' Trust, distributing funds to projects which will create jobs and improve people's life chances in the Eastern Cape, where unemployment is particularly rife. One of the projects funded is the Umthathi Training Programme, which focuses on sustainable agriculture and protection of indigenous medicinal plants.

In 2009 Zamile Giba was employed by Umthathi, initially for 3 months, with the funding provided by the Masikhulisane Trust. His tasks included clearing the Africulture nursery site of alien vegetation, weeding and watering, harvesting

vegetables, and planting new seedlings. He also helped separate the plants grown specifically for the traditional healers from the rest of the plants. When the weather was not conducive to outside work at the Africulture nursery, Zamile assisted at the Extension 7 nursery, sowing seedlings for use in other programmes.

Zamile's story is a typical example of work provision to someone who was previously unemployed, and who then worked reliably and consistently. Masikhulisane is dependent on ongoing donations to be able to fund jobs such as these on a long-term basis.

2010 Events



Thembisa car boot sale

Sunday 30 May, 8am to 1pm

or if bad weather, Monday 31 May

Buyers admitted free. Google Map using post code OX9 7AB From A40 turn off at Wheatley/Services and follow A418 towards Thame. Signs will direct you to Tetsworth Car Boot. Tetsworth site tel: 01844 281423. To find the Thembisa stall look out for the Thembisa banner and South African flag.

Donations – items to sell

Phone Grace Townshend (01865 766117) or email contact@thembisatrust.org if you can donate and deliver to Oxford before the sale any of the following: household items e.g. kitchen equipment, vases, small electrical items in working order, toys, children's clothes, curtains, sports equipment, books, or anything saleable that can be transported easily. NO adult clothing please.

World Cup Braai

Sunday 11 July, 3 to 6 pm

Ferndale, Tiddington

Time for a change! This year, instead of a walk, we'll have a braai for all the family at Ferndale, Tiddington, in order to raise funds for preschool places for orphans and needy children in and around Grahamstown.

The braai will be held at Ferndale, Albury View, Tiddington (Tel 01844 338661 queries and to book ahead if possible). Afterwards those who want to are welcome to stay and watch the World Cup final match on the Bowleys' large-screen TV. Food and soft drinks will be supplied. Tickets – £10, half price for under 10s. Wine and beer will be on sale (and possibility SA specialities).

Proceeds to 'Pre-school places for needy children'

Bonginkosi opens preschool building!

The Bonginkosi preschool's new building was officially opened with a dedication service on 7 May 2009. As you may remember, in response to an application

from Thembisa, Kennington Overseas Aid raised about £22,000 towards the new building. Bonginkosi is in Edendale – another area of great deprivation.





funding

Message from our new chairman

Stephen Bowley, Thembisa Trust Chairman

Since Tonia and I started the Thembisa Trust in 1988 there have been significant changes in South Africa, both political and economic. I agreed to become Chairman last year because I feel Thembisa still has an important role to play, supporting grassroots projects that struggle to obtain funding from other sources. We have contacts on the ground to select good sustainable projects. We can guarantee that hard raised funds are properly spent with minimal overhead costs.

This year our focus project is on providing preschool places for needy

children in the Grahamstown area. I ask you all to support our work by coming to the summer World Cup Braai – our main social event this year. Please also consider making a donation or, better still, becoming a regular giver. We are always looking for new people with new ideas and contacts to get involved in planning fund raising events.

Finally I would like to thank Grace Townshend for all the years she led the Trust. And to welcome Jenny Camons and Peter Braithwaite who have formally become Trustees, after many years of working hard for Thembisa.

Project funding 2009

Project / Organisation	Location	2009
Alexandria Haven (orphanage)	Eastern Cape	£15,500
African Leadership Development Institute (ALDI) – leadership training	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal	£1,250
Bethesda Foundation – centre for arts education and healtha	Nieu Bethesda, Eastern Cape	£1,250
Masikhulisane Trust – poverty alleviation	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£1,250
WARMTH – war against Malnutrition, TB and Hunger	Western Cape	£250
Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA)	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£300
Eluxolweni Street Children's Shelter	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£250
Bonginkosi ladies' blanket-making project	Edendale, KwaZulu-Natal	£250
Total		£20,300

Mailing list update

Thank you for responding to Thembisa's 2009 mailing survey. If you did not, please complete the enclosed survey and post it today. Postage on unwanted items is costly and Thembisa tries to minimize such waste. Covering admin costs with membership subscriptions enables the Trust to use 100% of all funds raised to support projects.

Your email address

To receive hot off the press news, and if you choose, the newsletters by email, send your email to contact@thembisatrust.org (together with your own name!) if we don't already have it. Emails will only be sent occasionally. Your email will never be passed to any third party.