



THE THEMBISA TRUST

**Grassroots support
in South Africa**

Newsletter no 30
Spring 2015

**Thembisa has
no political affiliation**

34 Trinity Rd,
Oxford, OX3 8LQ

www.thembisatrust.org

contact@thembisatrust.org

Patrons:

Desmond M Tutu
(Archbishop Emeritus),
Dame Janet Suzman

Chair:

Stephen Bowley

Trustees:

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

Treasurer and Administrator:

Peter Braithwaite

Newsletter editor:

Grace Townshend

Registered Charity No: 801978



about us



join us



projects



funding



events

Focus Projects 2015: MNCP



Cross Over



**JOIN
US**

Thembisa Trust Walk and Barbecue, Sunday 12 July 2015

All profits will go to support MNCP, and Cross Over
(see p. 2 for more details)

Small is beautiful

Tonia Cope Bowley, Thembisa Trust Co-Founder



Did you watch Red Nose Day – Comic Relief's Fun Evening on Friday 13 March? Early on there was a video of three street orphans in Kenya who have nothing – I mean nothing – and no one to care for them. They 'earn' their survival money by scrounging off rubbish dumps. They sleep in doorways or under the stars, and start the same routine tomorrow and the day after too. It is this type of kid for whom Thembisa wants to provide a chance in life.

Doing something for Someone is what Mother Teresa focused on. And this is what Thembisa is all about. You can't solve the world's problems but you can do something for Someone. And it is not just about doing something for 'anyone' but for some of the 'Someones' at the bottom of humanity's pile. Thembisa's focus is on the Someones in Southern Africa – currently South Africa and Zimbabwe. Those running the projects struggle to find sufficient support. These projects are too small to attract funding from the likes of Oxfam and Red Nose Day. So Thembisa steps in.

In January and February this year, Stephen and I visited several projects currently on Thembisa's support list in South Africa and Zimbabwe, and Grace visited one in Zimbabwe. We met some of these needy kids face to face. We also met 'The Grannies' who are raising their children's children – some were victims of AIDS. We met too those special people who run these projects. Through vision, hard work and ingenuity they not only deal with the day-to-day crises but seek to understand the causes and look for long-term solutions of self-sufficiency for those they work with and for.

In this letter you can read about these projects – in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: The Sweetwaters Bonginkosi Self-help Project, Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP), and iTHEMBA. In Harare, Zimbabwe, we witnessed what is being done for the Chishawasha Orphans and the amazing school for neglected kids, Cross Over. Chosen for our focus fundraising for this year are MNCP and Cross Over.

I pass on to you now buckets full of appreciation from those who benefit from your kind generosity. Perhaps you can do one thing more – interest others to join Thembisa. This year Thembisa's 27th annual walks-and-barbecue day is on Sunday 12 July. Be sure to put this date in your diary now. Do come and bring some friends with you. It will be great to see you!

JOIN US Walk and Barbecue, Sunday 12 July

- ▶ Long walk starts at 10:00 am in Chilterns. Pub stop for lunch.
- ▶ Short walk starts at 3:00 pm at Tiddington Village Hall, OX9 1AA
- ▶ Both walks finish at Ferndale, with light refreshments.
- ▶ Contact: sbowleypc@aol.com to confirm you will do the long walk.
- ▶ Barbecue from 4:30 to 8:00 pm 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 01844 338661.
- ▶ Virgin money giving link: see p.7.

Project update

Chishawasha orphans

Grace Townshend, Thembisa Trustee

Thembisa has been supporting the Chishawasha orphans' project in Zimbabwe for some years, and this year I was able to visit Maggie and Steve Norton, who administer the funds we send across. Unemployment is at 85% in Zimbabwe and poverty is rampant. The Perekedza orphans' club is held every 2 weeks in a building on the Nortons' property. Some of the children walk 9 miles to get there. Many live with grandmothers but some have very sad backgrounds, having been beaten and rejected at home.

At the club the children get a good meal, life lesson, Bible story, and pack of basic supplies to take home (maize meal, sugar, soya mince, green soap and sometimes donated treats like popcorn or sweets). The older children help the smaller ones carry the supplies home – sometimes on bicycles, or on the girls' heads! The week I visited, everybody was very proud of a young man named Vitalis who had passed his O-level exams. Currently, the older children are receiving a very basic business course, including budgeting and how to start up a small business.

In addition to supporting the orphans' club, funds sent by Thembisa have also been

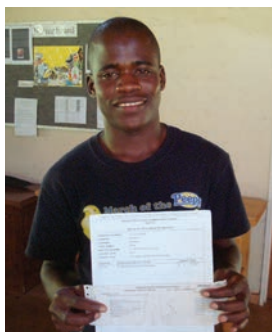
► *The headmaster of St Joseph's school in the Chishawasha area takes a close interest in his pupils' welfare.*

used to help with other essential needs in the Chishawasha area, such as school fees and medical costs. Maggie is in touch with the sisters at the local clinic and with local school headmasters, who know the families' situations and can also provide follow-up when help has been given.

I was so impressed by the local adults whom I met, as well as Maggie's co-workers and helpers, all faithfully doing what they can to make people's lives better. All expressed their profound thanks for Thembisa's help.



► *Baby weighing time at the local clinic.*



► *Vitalis showing off his hard-earned O-level results.*



► *Nigel had a brain tumour. Thembisa money helped pay for an operation.*





Focus Projects 2015

Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP)

<https://www.facebook.com/MamaNtombisCommunityProjects>



Thembisa was set up to support grassroots projects and MNCP is without doubt a grassroots project. Although officially launched only a few years ago, the seed was sown a few years before when Pastor Chris Naidoo became aware of shacks appearing close to his doorstep. People, desperate for employment in order to survive, move to the edge of large cities, building homes on vacant land with any materials they can find. People settling slightly further out have the benefit of more space.

In the long term, the tiny MNCP team wants to see people skilled and self-supporting. In the short term this is what they do...

- ▶ Volunteer skilled teachers help those who struggle at school.
- ▶ Support the grannies who care for their deceased children's children.
- ▶ Transport the sick to hospital.
- ▶ Alert and appeal to the wider community for help when disasters strike.
- ▶ Enlist the help of volunteers.
- ... and much more.



▶ A volunteer skilled teacher with Patrick, MNCP's community worker, in a lesson.

- ▶ Patrick demonstrates the use of a Wonder Box for cooking. It minimizes the need for fuel.





Cross Over

www.crossoverzim.com

Facebook: Cross Over Zim



▶ Debbie demonstrates a foot pedal water-saving hand washing device.

Cross Over is a very special mentoring programme that aims to help vulnerable children in Zimbabwe to live and work towards a hopeful future. The aim is to restore the self-confidence of young people who have 'fallen through the gaps' within a strong nurturing environment. Cross Over study groups, each led by a mentor, contain no more than 15 students. All groups follow the same learning approach, based on a curriculum designed to consistently incorporate character, thinking skills and practical skills development into every area of study. The long-term goal is to develop the students to become reliable and productive members of their families, communities and workplaces.

Tonia Cope Bowley reports

Our visit to Cross Over near Harare, was a good surprise. There we found Debbie, the founder, and her dedicated team (local people trained for the job) providing education for vulnerable children who have no other provision. Cross Over hopes to double the number of students over the next few years. In the long term they hope to empower communities to educate themselves.

The most important thing for students to learn is that they matter. The academic priority is to establish strong numeracy and literacy skills and to teach students to think both logically and creatively.

Practical skills teach the children to care for themselves and their families. The farming programme is an example. Each child has their 'own' garden which they are responsible for. The harvest is used for school meals. They are encouraged to drop in to weed their patch during the school holidays.

Some children live 9 or 10 miles away and have to leave home as early as 5.00 am to walk to school for 8.00 am. At the end of the day they walk home – such is the eagerness for education.

Courses are given in health and safety, HIV/AIDS, hygiene, and healthy principles for family life and basic business skills.



▶ Lessons are held inside or in the fresh air.



Project update

iThemba community projects

Tonia Cope Bowley, Co-Founder

iThemba believes in development rather than relief; building capacity rather than dependence; sustainable change rather than quick fixes. With this philosophy, and with broader support like that which Thembisa can offer, iThemba continues to bring opportunity and hope in the Sweetwaters area near Pietermaritzburg

When I first visited iThemba mid-2012 and saw land the local chief had donated to iThemba, I met the workers delighted to have a job learning construction skills. Digging out the area by hand to level the ground, they were using the soil to make bricks. (See 2013/14 Reports at <http://thembisatrust.org/newsletters.htm>)

In January 2015, Stu Walker, Manager, showed Stephen and me the progress. Brick-making, used in building community facilities, continues apace.

Studies show that early education is critical for future learning success and yet in South Africa only 1 in 5 students attend a formal crèche or pre-school. This finding has helped to motivate iThemba to increase its involvement and support to crèches.

Alongside of this, iThemba continues with other aspects. For example: educating the locals in sustainable permaculture.

The Bonginkosi self-help project, Sweetwaters

How rewarding it was to see the fruits of many years of dedicated volunteers who have encouraged and trained people in this impoverished area. The early skills of making crochet and knitted blankets have moved up a rung. These quality quilts are quite stunning and can now be bought through an outlet in Hilton.

Those participating in growing vegetables were keen to 'show-and-tell' about their produce. These skills bring food, finance and fulfillment.



► Old cabbage leaves placed on the beds to increase fertility.

Do join Thembisa to help iThemba in its immediate and farsighted endeavours to uplift this community. Keep up to date with iThemba news at: <http://www.ithembaprojects.org.za/our-blog.html>



Why Thembisa is still relevant

Stephen Bowley, Thembisa Trust Chairman and Co-Founder



Earlier this year, Tonia and I visited South Africa and Zimbabwe. We went to see a number of projects supported by Thembisa. I had not been out to South Africa for nearly 10 years, and never to Zimbabwe, and was out of touch with the realities of ordinary life for millions of poor Africans. What struck me was how little had changed for people living in informal settlements in the cities and towns, and in the nearby rural tribal areas. Granted, change is taking place through the improvement to infrastructure. Dirt roads are being replaced by tarmac, electricity is being provided, schools are being built and new houses are evident. However, the pervading social issues of poor education, unemployment and the consequences of AIDS remain.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find articles on the projects we visited. The projects vary, but all have a focus on education and training. At Thembisa we prioritise support for projects that can

improve people's prospects in the long term and take them beyond the need for support.

We are a small charity and in a normal year have about £10,000 to donate. This is a literal 'drop in the ocean' compared to the overwhelming needs, but by working with small, well-run NGOs and projects we can make this money work hard – and the pound converts to many rand in South Africa. We saw that the money we send is well used and makes a real difference to many lives.

Some people find reasons not to support projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe, including the political situation in both countries, and the perception that South Africa is a wealthy country that should deal with its own problems. In reality, the gaps in public provision are enormous, and the NGOs and projects we support meet urgent needs that would otherwise go unmet.

Yes, Thembisa is still relevant. We thank you all for your continuing support.

NUHORUS: support for sustainable farming

Niche Unity Hands On Rural Unification Support initiative (NUHORUS) is a non-profit organisation which aims to promote the use of environmentally friendly farming, benefitting local rural communities as well as global agricultural sustainability.

A current project is in Suurbraak, a village in the Western Cape, whose residents subscribe to the benefits of organic farming practices, but many do not know much about them, and use poisons freely. NUHORUS is working with the locals to convert farming practices to agro-ecology. This includes education initiatives and the designation of 'no poison zones'.



moneygiving

You can donate to Thembisa any time through Virgin Money Giving:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/>
Just search for 'Thembisa' under 'Find a charity,' or go directly to:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/thembisatrust>

For walk details, put 'Thembisa' into the search box under 'Find a fundraising event'.

To donate directly to MNCP go to:
<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/ThembisaTrustMNCP>

Unfortunately there's a glitch on the VMG site so you can't currently find MNCP from the home page.



Project funding April 2014 – March 2015

Project / Organisation	Location	Amount
Masikhulisane Trust Alleviation of poverty through job creation Pre-school Places Includes needy children	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£1,000
Bonginkosi Self-help Project Creative skills support HIV orphans	Sweetwaters, KwaZulu-Natal	£950
Chishawasha Orphans ^a Includes provision of care and teaching life skills	Zimbabwe	£1,250
Cross Over (New project, January 2015)	Zimbabwe	£500
iThemba Community Projects Life training, crèches, pre-schools, sustainable nutrition, employment opportunities	Mpumzuza, KwaZulu-Natal	£1,250
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) ^a Supporting vulnerable children in two informal settlements	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal	£4,850
NUHORUS Promoting sustainable resource use by farmers	Western Cape	£700
Total		£10,500

^a Included donations ear-marked for these projects

Creative fund-raising

Over the past year:

- ▶ Peter and Jen Braithwaite asked friends to donate money to Thembisa in lieu of presents for their wedding anniversary and Peter's significant birthday. Ralph Crouch did the same for his birthday. (Over £1,000!)
- ▶ One member continued to sell books that were excess to requirements at the publishing firm where she works (£191).
- ▶ Two members organised a table at a car boot sale (£126).
- ▶ Four members were invited by their friend who works at a large organisation to serve cakes to visitors at the open day (£176).

Big and small amounts – but all adding up to make a difference. What could YOU do?

We are also extremely grateful to Bernwode News for a grant of £1,000 to MNCP in 2014.

A REMINDER

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

Thembisa website upgrade

We are in the process of upgrading Thembisa's website, using money that was donated specifically for the purpose of meeting administrative or information needs. As always, 100% of money donated to projects is passed on to the projects.

Thembisa on Facebook



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