



April 2018

Dear Thembisa friends and supporters

I write to you from South Africa during this historic time of HOPE and new dawn. Being back in my beloved country on holiday, while my son, David, is doing voluntary work for two projects Thembisa has supported, is eye opening and indeed a bonus.

Stephen Bowley

First I must tell you the sad news that Stephen died peacefully on 9 October 2017 and with full acceptance that it was his time to go after his 15-month melanoma challenge. You may have read his piece in the 2017 Thembisa newsletter, which he wrote while undergoing treatment in Oxford's Churchill hospital. He explained that he was giving notice that he would have to resign as Chairman of Thembisa at some point due to his health issues.

Stephen leaves a huge gap in the lives of all who knew him, but more importantly he has left a lasting legacy – not least through Thembisa.

Celebrating Stephen's life

On Saturday 9 December we held, in Tiddington Village Hall, a celebration of Stephen's life at his request. This was a vibrant – sad but joyful – occasion with around a hundred present. Tributes to him had poured

in via email, letters, phone messages and visits. At the celebration, people representing the most significant aspects of his life provided a rounded picture of Stephen.

Several have asked how they could contribute towards honouring Stephen. There are various ways to do this if you want to, as explained at the end of this letter. But first let me tell you a little more about this compassionate, humorous, professional man who co-founded Thembisa 30 years ago over Easter in 1988. Then I will spell out Thembisa's plans going forward.

Stephen and I met on holiday in Scotland at the end of 1980. We were married in Oxford on Easter Saturday, 1983. Five years later, during the height of apartheid when sanctions were in place to put pressure on the then South African government to free Nelson Mandela and to develop a fair system for ALL South African citizens, we became concerned about the plight of the millions of disadvantaged people in the country. We were aware that those suffering the most were those at the very bottom of the social pile. So we planned a month-long visit over Easter 1988 to explore for ourselves their needs and what was being done to assist them. We travelled widely visiting groups who were doing something to uplift those in situations of neglect and deprivation.

As we flew back to England, it was Stephen who said: 'We've got to do something.' This was the seed he planted from which Thembisa has grown.

Over the last 30 years Thembisa has been on an amazing journey of encouragement and support. Through the generosity of donors and volunteers Thembisa has made a difference to some 75 varied projects, each designed to help uplift people onto the first rung of the ladder towards self sufficiency and self respect. It gives me great pleasure to report that our donations, without exception, have been well used. And that some of 'our' projects are now self supporting.

Thembisa into the future

It was Stephen's express wish that Thembisa should grow to increase our support to the disadvantaged. Now as we continue our own unique journey without him, perhaps this is best expressed in these words from the poem 'Miss me but let me go' (which was included in his send-off service): 'We must bury our sorrow in doing good.' So, let us work together to do just that and increase our support to the disadvantaged in Southern Africa.

Very best wishes for a good summer.

We look forward to seeing you at events during this year.

Tonia Cope Bowley,
Thembisa co-founder

Needs in South Africa and Zimbabwe

The Trust is registered to operate in Southern Africa. Initially, with our finite resources, we limited support to projects in South Africa. In recent years we have extended support to two projects in Zimbabwe – also a country with vast needs.

South Africa is rated as having the world's largest gap between the haves and the have-nots. Both countries are hopefully at the cusp of positive change, but those at the bottom of the social pile truly need assistance to get going in a self-sustaining way. Therefore we want to take this opportunity, as we celebrate Thembisa's **30th Birthday**, to grow the Trust.

New chairperson

We, the Trustees, are grateful to Grace Townshend for stepping into the role of acting chairperson. We anticipate that by the end of the year there will be someone in a more permanent capacity.

Big 30 Walk and Barbecue, Sunday 15 July

Please reserve the date for our **Big 30th Birthday Party**, taking place on Sunday 15 July 2018 at Ferndale, Tiddington near Oxford. Tell your friends and bring them along.

RSVP contact@thembisatrust.org
(or 01865 766117)

Please provide your name and contact details.

Donations in memory of Stephen Bowley

- ▶ The easiest way is via Virgin Money Giving using this link: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SomeoneSpecial/StephenBowley>. Or just open Virgin Money Giving and search for Stephen Bowley.
- ▶ Alternatively, send a cheque to:
The Thembisa Trust, 34 Trinity Road, Oxford OX3 8LQ. Please indicate: In memory of Stephen Bowley.
- ▶ Request a copy of the booklet Tonia wrote for the celebration of Stephen's life held on 9 December 2017, entitled *Stephen Bowley age 65³/₄ – The inside story*. This booklet includes Stephen's personal account of his life written in 2015, Adrian Mole style, along with tributes people have penned about him.

If you would like a copy please email, toncopebowley@aol.com with the subject: Request booklet on Stephen. This will be posted to you, in return for a donation to Thembisa for a minimum of £5.00.

Be our guest at a Friends of Thembisa Braai



Sunday 29 April, 15h30 to 18h00.
Kidlington, Oxfordshire

RSVP bfadam10@gmail.com

(or 07967 054543) by 22 April 2018.

Location to be supplied when replying.

Accessible using the no 2 bus.

As part of our strategy to grow Thembisa we plan to launch a new arm of the Trust – Friends of Thembisa. We invite anyone willing to volunteer their time or expertise for the charity to contact us (contact@thembisatrust.org). The first gathering to launch this initiative will be a real South African braai (barbecue) on Sunday 29 April.

There isn't a catch!

Over some good South African food, we'd like to tell you more about the Thembisa Trust and our vision to help grassroots projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

It's open to anyone with an interest in/heart for South Africa or Zimbabwe. Please come as our guest, and pass the invitation on if you know someone who may be interested.

We have a well established system for distributing funds and ensuring they are used properly. What we need is help in marketing Thembisa and in fundraising through events large or small.

For example:

- ▶ Organise, from your own home, something like providing a tea or a meal – proceeds to Thembisa
- ▶ Organise other fundraising events like a bike ride; walk etc,
- ▶ Help at larger events.

Urgent funding needed: Phathakge-Madiba Home Care

Gavin Fischer (a BBC journalist based in Johannesburg) approached the Trust for funding for the Phathakge-Madiba Home Care charity. The charity offers a home for, mostly, elderly homeless people. We have awarded £1000 to the project but they need a further £2000.00 to carry out urgent repairs and extensions to the home.

Gavin hopes to raise a further £500 extra himself by getting sponsorship to run an ultra marathon in June. He has set up a Go get funding page at: <https://gogetfunding.com/help-build-the-phathakge-madiba-care-home/>