



THE THEMBISA TRUST

**Grassroots support
in South Africa**

Newsletter no 33
Winter 2018

**Thembisa has
no political affiliation**

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join us



projects



funding



events

Focus Projects 2018



MNCP



Chishawasha

GADRA *Dr Mabizela, Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University,
Grahamstown, with some Gadra Matric students*



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Thembisa Trust Walk and
Barbecue, Sunday 30 June 2019**

All profits will go directly to support projects

2018 – a different year for Thembisa

Grace Townshend, Thembisa Acting Chair

Our newsletter is coming to you later this year; regular supporters will have received the letter we sent out in April with information about Stephen Bowley's death and about the needs in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

You may remember that in our last newsletter, Stephen wrote from his hospital bed of the need for fresh recruits to Thembisa. We long to see the Trust grow so that we can provide more funds to projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe. We've made a start in growing our support base by holding a smaller braai in April, which some of you attended, and we plan to have more get-togethers for anyone interested. Do let us know if that is you!

Celebrating Thembisa's 30th anniversary

In July we celebrated 30 years of the Trust's existence – a remarkable milestone for a small organisation staffed entirely by volunteers. The article by Tonia Cope Bowley, our Co-founder (page 3), gives a very brief history of the Trust and the projects we have funded.

Instead of a braai (barbecue), this year we pushed the boat out and had a pig roast – all paid for by a legacy from Stephen, our co-founder and chair until his death in October 2017. Unfortunately the date – 15 July – coincided with the World Cup football final and the Wimbledon men's final, but it was nonetheless a very happy occasion. Maggie Norton from Zimbabwe spoke briefly about Chishawasha's work (see page 6). The money raised all went to Chishawasha and to MNCP (page 8). Special thanks to Mr Finn and What's Cooking for catering, and to the Thatch Pub and Bizzie Lizzie in Thame, and others, for donating raffle prizes.



Welcoming our new Chair

We are so delighted to welcome Frank Adam as Thembisa's new chair, with effect from 1 October 2018. Frank has been a Trustee of Thembisa for the past 15 years. He and his wife Beverly, and daughters Natalie and Kirstie, have been stalwart supporters of our walks/braais and other activities. Frank will bring his wealth of teaching and business experience to the role, together with new ideas for expanding the Trust. Welcome Frank!

None of Thembisa's achievements would have been possible without our supporters, so thank you to all who have contributed to the Trust in any way, and please do join us as we continue the work in our 31st year and beyond.

A mini-history

Tonia Cope Bowley,
Thembisa Trust Co-Founder



Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Yesterday

Without Stephen Bowley the Trust would not have been born. On the plane on our way back to the UK, after a month-long exploratory visit to South Africa over Easter 1988, to find out what was happening to people in poverty at the grass roots, it was Stephen's comment: 'We've got to do something' that propelled us into action. We soon felt like catalysts as we discovered many shared our concern.

Next, we needed a name and an emblem to identify the Trust. Again it was Stephen's question to me: What is the Zulu word for HOPE? That sent me to my Zulu dictionary. THEMBISA means 'to hold out hope'. Our aim as a Charitable Trust is to provide a chance in life to those less fortunate. Each donation is a hand-up, not a hand-out, with the aim of enabling some to step up to hope and fulfillment.

Today

As we look back on the 30 years since the birth of Thembisa we are grateful and encouraged. Thembisa has raised upwards of 1/3 million pounds and has provided assistance to some 75 projects in South Africa and Zimbabwe – a few of these are now self-supporting. In both countries the need is HUGE and is often due to historical and unjust issues. The trust is run by volunteer Trustees and helpers:

- ▶ 100% of all donations are sent to projects.
- ▶ Admin costs are kept low and covered by donations given for that purpose.

Tomorrow

Thembisa should grow – Stephen's expressed wish. In order to grow, the Trust needs more volunteers. Special needs include those with skills in marketing, fundraising, databases, web development, and social media.

In addition, we welcome anyone who is willing to raise funds for us (no special skills needed!). Could you raise funds for Thembisa in any way – maybe by hosting a tea or meal or by asking for donations to Thembisa in lieu of birthday or Christmas presents? If you could help, please get in touch by speaking to a Trustee or sending an email to contact@thembisatrust.org

Raise funds while shopping online

Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk, put 'Thembisa Trust' in the search box, and register in order to obtain donations for Thembisa when you shop online. We've raised more than £210!

A successful fund-raising idea

A trustee has raised hundreds of pounds for Thembisa through a book donation table at her place of work. Colleagues can take second-hand books in return for a donation.

Could you do something similar?



Project update



Bonginkosi Sweetwaters self-help project

Volunteers meet with about 150 Zulu folk in Sweetwaters – a very impoverished semi-rural area of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. The project explores ways to create more sustainable and dignified lives for the locals through micro businesses, crafts and food gardens. Other activities are education projects – learning to read, improvement of

Grannies display the fleeces given to them to help stave off the cold

English and life skills – and help with medical issues and funeral costs.

Sarah and Julian Dottridge and Carol Cassidy thanked Thembisa for the funding and sent us some descriptions of people who have been helped.



Mosely, their translator, is in her late 70s. She has cared for and raised three grandsons whose parents either died of AIDS or deserted the children. She has recently taken in an elderly (unrelated) man who is incontinent and cannot speak. She has to clean, care and feed him and take him to hospital regularly. They give her cash, extra food and clothing when available.

Sihle, orphaned at an early age, was not wanted by any of his extended family, who were themselves struggling to eke out a living. At one time he was reduced to spending most of his time in a chicken coop and was not attending school. The project paid his school fees, bought him a school

uniform to replace the tatters he was wearing, and provided him with small amounts of food. Sihle managed, against all odds, to pass his matriculation examination and got a job with a fast food outlet. He is hoping to continue his studies.

Mabongi was orphaned at age 16 and had to drop out of school in order to care for her two much younger siblings. She fell pregnant and had a daughter in 2009. The project helped her with school fees, food and clothes for the children. Through encouragement by one of the helpers, her marriage to the father of the child was successfully negotiated, and she and her siblings have been absorbed into her new husband's family.

Sipho has been empowered to build Phungu Luthu toilets (air ventilated pit latrines) for project members who are the most needy – disabled, old and poor. He runs this as a successful business.

Project update

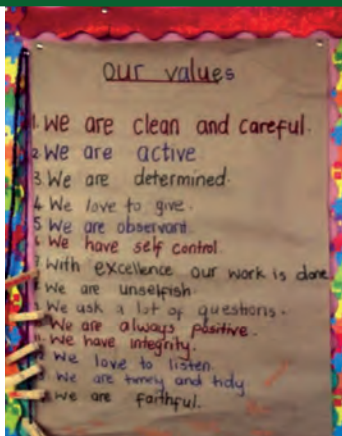


Cross Over

Many family and social structures in Zimbabwe have been hugely damaged over the past 20 years. This has led to education becoming out of reach for the very poor, and a loss of positive role models in many communities.

Cross Over was started by Deb Norton in 2007 with a desire to bring high quality, character-based education to vulnerable communities with minimum resources. It also seeks to raise up mentor-leaders who can significantly impact their communities. Currently Cross Over serves 85 children and trains 9 local mentors in teaching and leadership skills so that one day they can start new Cross Over groups in other communities.

The project has changed the lives of both the students and mentors. Most students come to Cross Over hopeless, but in no time they begin to change and engage with their learning. Mentors discover previously unknown potential within themselves and also become breadwinners for their families.



► Cross Over values

The first two students at Cross Over came when they were school dropouts. The boys were keen learners and were also assisted to start a small business. When they left Cross Over they continued studying and working and eventually paid for themselves to write national examinations. They are now still running their small business and one of them is employed as

a Field Officer at an NGO.

One of the mentors is Nomatter, who was once a Cross Over student himself! He attended night classes last year and wrote some of his O-levels. Along with subjects passed previously, he now has a full complement of subjects to apply for teacher training, and is saving towards this.

The second pop up classroom (equipment that folds up into a mobile steel cupboard) was commissioned in July 2018. Both pilot units are in use, and serving well, but as fixed, rather than mobile units. Cross Over is trying to attract help from a professional designer/engineer before commencing work on pop up number 3.



► The pop-up classroom.

► Mentor training.





Focus Project 2018

Chishawasha orphans' project

The number of orphans in Zimbabwe is now 1.3 million, 80% of them orphaned by AIDS. Fourteen years ago Steve and Maggie Norton started a project, Perekedza, to help some of the children living near to them outside Harare. Currently Perekedza has at least 92 children registered who have either no parents or just one disabled/sick parent. Many are looked after by their grandmothers. The children are given regular food packs and taught Life Skills. Five students from Perekedza are attending university and another four are being trained at a church in town on how to start a business. Perekedza pays for 33 children to go to St Peter's Senior school and 52 children to St Joseph's junior school (as schooling is not free in Zimbabwe).

Last year the project was given a piece of land to farm by a lady called Esnat, the child care worker for Chishawasha. The Nortons' son Mik, a trained agriculturist, taught the children how to feed themselves by growing maize, soya and vegetables. They met at Esnat's most Saturdays in the rainy season and produced enough food to

be completely self-sufficient for the next year. What a thrill for them to be able to provide food for their families! However, Perekedza still needs to supply food parcels to families who have not grown their own food. Our funds, sent after the 30th celebrations, arrived just when funds were needed in part for these.

The children initially met at the Norton's property, but now meet every 2 weeks in their home area so they don't have to walk so far and the community can take more responsibility. The project continues to pay for medical bills when needed and supports the local clinic with a regular sum of money, so that families who are too poor to pay for a clinic visit or medications, can be seen.



▶ The project helped them lose everything in their hut.



▶ The top student will save them money.



▶ Seed and fertiliser being given out. As a result, they were able to help feed their families. Funds helped to repair the roof of the garage.

▶ First vegetable harvest!



ed these children, who
n a fire that destroyed



s got bicycles, which
many miles of walking.



a result 52 orphans
unds from Thembisa

My education on the value of kinship care

A visitor's impression of Chishawasha

Julian Chieza

I first heard about the Chishawasha Orphans project through a press release from the Thembisa Trust. Zimbabwean by birth, with a South African father, Thembisa's work immediately drew my attention. The women they supported looked like my aunties and the boys in the khaki shorts eating sadza reminded me of myself as a child in Zimbabwe: I wanted to know more.

When I visited Zimbabwe this Summer, I asked if I could go and see for myself some of the work Thembisa supports. My colleague Jenny put me in touch with Maggie Norton, who with her son Mik runs the Chishawasha Orphans project. Mik, a trained horticulturist, drove me to the Chishawasha area and described his efforts to develop self-sustaining agricultural projects with the orphans. He works to source better strains of seed from his contacts in the agricultural sector, in order to help the orphans grow more productive, faster-growing crops for consumption and with a surplus for sale. The conversations took my thoughts to the day-to-day realities for many in Zimbabwe, such as unemployment and the need for self-sustainable livelihoods. Rather than using the funds raised to buy bulk food-aid from abroad, the Nortons are working towards long-term change that happens when people can solve their own problems in ways close to their cultures and traditions.

When we arrived to Chishawasha, Mik introduced me to two locals – Shelton, a tradesman who helps supervise the agricultural work, and Esnat, a social worker. I liked the fact that, by offering locals gainful employment, the project benefits the community at large. This also offers the children the continuity of being supported by local individuals and role models who understand their culture and environment better than any foreign aid worker.

Chatting to the local farmer in Shona, our mother tongue, I learnt that some of the older orphans have produced enough corn to feed themselves and their guardians and even sell at the market. The orphans live with local family members in the community and mainly come together at the project site on weekends. Esnat always tries to find relatives who can offer a stable home environment, and she makes regular checks on the children. The project has integrated its work into the strong history of kinship-care in Zimbabwe which I had experienced throughout my life, even while living in England. As a local, I knew she was best placed to know the ins and outs of most of the community members. Despite her 4-foot height she had a manner about her that demanded respect!

As I waved Shelton and Esnat goodbye, I was sorry that I hadn't had the chance to see the children. I thought over everything I had learnt that afternoon and what I already knew: Zimbabwe is my country and it is time I did more for it.



Focus Project 2018



MNCP Giving children a better start

With unemployment in South Africa currently at 27% (2018), many people migrate into the cities to seek whatever opportunities they can in order to survive. Informal settlements spring up, lacking even the basic infrastructure of proper roads, water, sanitation and electricity. This is the context where Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) works, in particular in the Ezinketheni and Jika Joe informal settlements near Pietermaritzburg.

MNCP's main focus is on children, as they are the most vulnerable members of society. However, realising that they cannot work in isolation, MNCP offers support to the wider community. Their key focus areas are: education, health, community development, and sports and culture.

Activities include:

- ▶ Home visits to identify orphaned and vulnerable children
- ▶ Provision of food parcels to needy families for 12 months
- ▶ Help with establishing vegetable gardens
- ▶ Provision of school uniforms, shoes and stationery
- ▶ A Breakfast Club feeds 300 children every weekday morning with a nutritious porridge. This ensures that children have at least one wholesome meal a day and can concentrate on their studies
- ▶ A biweekly Early Childhood Development programme for 20 of the poorest children (there are no local preschools or crèches)
- ▶ A Reading and Homework Club to help children develop a love for books
- ▶ Assistance with school assignments.

A mentorship programme was started in 2018, to encourage children to work hard and dream big in order to achieve their life goals instead of being discouraged by their present circumstances. Having discovered that most children drop out of High School after 8 or 9 years of schooling, MNCP aims to change this through their Career Guidance and Mentorship programmes.

MNCP also does all it can to support the aged grandmothers (gogos) who are caring for many orphaned grandchildren, meeting with them once a week. Once a quarter the gogos are given a cooked meal and a goodie bag to take home.

All of this work is carried out by just three staff members together with dozens of volunteers. If funds permitted, what is really needed is a female field worker, a social worker and at least one more fundraiser. The needs are so great ... and all too often disaster strikes. Soon after Thembisa sent £1000 from funds raised at the pig roast, a fire at the Jika Joe Settlement destroyed 45 shacks, leaving 62 people



absolutely destitute. MNCP provided them with cooked meals, blankets, clothes, plastic basins, soaps and face towels –

working closely with community leaders to ensure an even distribution of donations.



- Donated goods to help destitute residents. Sandra Pillay, who works tirelessly for MNCP, is second from left.
- The devastating effects of the Jika Joe fire.



- Gogo Khoza's (who is blind) old house and the new house built for her by MNCP.

A UK volunteer at MNCP!

David Bowley, son of Stephen and Tonia Bowley, spent time helping the MNCP staff, Sandra and Solomon, during a visit to South Africa in February 2018. He was shocked to see that the people living in the informal settlements have almost nothing. Many people live in shacks, having moved to the squatter areas desperate to find work in the city. Many households have no income at all. The whole area is riddled with AIDS, and there are many grandmothers ('gogos') looking after orphaned children.

David particularly remembers meeting Gogo Ntshangase who was working in her vegetable garden and Gogo Khoza, who is blind. MNCP has recently built a small house for her to live in.

David helped Solomon distribute a meal of rice and vegetables at a local school to hundreds of pupils, who queued patiently. This is something that MNCP does occasionally, with the food provided by an organisation called 'Food for life'.

David saw for himself what a difference the funds sent by Thembisa can make.



- David helping the MNCP team serve 1300 plates of food and juice to the children.



Gogos' party a huge success! Julia Davey



■ Solomon Qadi with Gogo Ntshangase



■ At 106 years old, Gogo Ntshangase still works in her vegetable garden.

A special luncheon party was organised by MNCP on the 4th October 2018. Its purpose was to honour all the 'Gogos' in particular Gogo Ntshangase known fondly as 'The Matriarch of Zinketheni', who has turned 106. Everyone had a wonderful time, with the Gogos being provided with a good meal, having fun socialising amongst each other and listening to a talk from Pastor Khumalo.

Ezinketheni, where Gogo Ntshangase now lives with her 18-year-old grandson (her own ten children and husband having passed away), is an informal settlement just outside Pietermaritzburg which lacks some of the basic necessities such as proper roads, water and housing.

Sandra Pillay, programme manager and fundraiser for MNCP, explains that a wish of Gogo Ntshangase is to have electricity in Ezinketheni and running water in her home, as the people of Ezinketheni have to walk a long distance to collect water from a community tap. Her house, along with others, is made of wattle and mud and Gogo Ntshangase feels it is in need of renovation.

A number of local papers covered the story, such as the Maritzburg Sun article entitled 'Gardening and God Keeps Gogo Going' and the Publiceye Maritzburg article where Gogo Ntshangase highlights that it is her faith in God and love of gardening that has enabled her to reach such a grand age. In this article she describes her favourite food of vegetables and phuthu (maize porridge) always cooked on an open fire outside.

At the luncheon Gogo Ntshangase gave a brief resume of her life story interpreted with the help of Pastor Khumalo and Solomon Qadi.

Another of the Gogos, Gogo Mveli, said she grew up hearing stories from the Shembe Faith, but her life now has new meaning since attending the weekly Bible Studies with other Gogos. Gogo Mveli said that MNCP has done 'many good things for the Gogos whereas no-one else', in her view, 'thinks about them.'

The Thembisa Trust thanks MNCP for the support it gives to the children and elderly.

Project update



Masikhulisane

Giving students with potential a chance at higher education

Grahamstown is a small town beset by poverty and unemployment. Our contact, Professor Chris Mann, is a Trustee of the Masikhulisane ('Let us Grow') Trust, which advises donors where their funds can best be directed in the face of so many dire needs, and monitors how grants are used.

For the past few years donations from Thembisa have gone towards bursaries for youngsters in preschools and the GADRA Matric School (GMS). The GMS selects youngsters from poor backgrounds who show academic promise but whose matric results aren't quite good enough for acceptance at college or university. With funds from both local donors and Thembisa, two to three students a year have received bursaries to attend GMS.

One such student, Nande, lived with her unemployed mother and walked the long distance to GMS daily, as the family could not afford public transport. Through GMS she improved her marks and was accepted to study for a Bachelor of Arts at Rhodes University. She received a GADRA bursary to assist with cost-of-living expenses and has now proceeded to 2nd year. She is involved in GADRA mentoring programmes to help others.

Another student, Loyiso, lived with his grandmother who had to look after four grandchildren on her pension of approx. £60 per month. With the help of a Thembisa and Masikhulisane Trust-funded bursary Loyiso went to GMS and improved his school-leaving results. He is now studying for a Bachelor of Education at Rhodes University, planning on a teaching career, and coordinates the Reading Club at a local high school.

New project Phathakge-Madiba Care Home



Tembisa is a sprawling township north east of Johannesburg. Like many of South Africa's townships it is marked by a fragility of life, with few safety nets to save the poorest. The Phathakge-Madiba Care Home is an ordinary house run by Rebecca Phathakge and her daughter Lerato. They have taken in hundreds of people over 20 years, including the destitute, homeless, orphans and those who need temporary accommodation, regardless of race or colour. Some live out their days there, many say it saved their lives. All become part of the family.

Gavin Fischer, a BBC journalist based in Johannesburg, first visited the project as a journalist, wanting to know how these women came to dedicate every waking hour

of their lives to others for free, while also fighting to scrape the few hundred pounds a month to keep it running. He saw that they have built on extra rooms as they have been able to afford them, turning a two-bedroom house into a sprawling space housing up to 30 people at a time. But the work has been shoddy, and often unfinished.

With funds from Thembisa together with Gavin's own fund-raising (which included running the Comrades Ultra-Marathon!), building work has now been done on the two bathrooms: a shower, a bath, sinks and toilets installed, and hot water running again. The last step is to get the ceilings done, as they are still open to the rafters. A new cooker is also desperately needed.



Project funding April 2017 – March 2018

Project / Organisation	Location	Amount
Masikhulisane Trust Alleviation of poverty through supporting educational projects	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£1,850
Bonginkosi Self-help Project Creative skills support HIV orphans	Sweetwaters, KwaZulu-Natal	£800
Chishawasha Orphans Includes provision of care and teaching life skills	Zimbabwe	£2,625 ^a
Cross Over Educational programme	Zimbabwe	£1,612
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) Supporting the community, in particular vulnerable children, in two informal settlements	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal	£3,725 ^a
Rebecca Phathakges Home Housing homeless people	Tembisa township, Gauteng	£750 ^a
iThembalomntwana Pre-school Pre-school	Edendale KwaZulu-Natal	£500
Total		£11,862

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

^a Included donations earmarked for these projects

New Edendale pre-school



Thembisa has recently started funding the iThembalomntwana (meaning 'hope of the child') pre-school in Edendale. The community was in desperate need of this since the Bonginkosi pre-school (funded by Thembisa some years ago) sadly closed, as children who haven't attended pre-school struggle when they start primary school. iThembalomntwana opened in January this year under the auspices of African Enterprise, with 40 pre-school children.

A reminder about GDPR

Like all organisations in the UK, we are subject to the new General Data Protection Regulation. This means that **we need your permission** to keep contacting you – see the enclosed letter and form. If these are missing, and you want to keep hearing from us, and have not yet told us, please let us know at contact@thembisatrust.org.

Your personal data are treated as strictly confidential and are used only by the Thembisa Trust for our own administrative purposes and to contact you. Your details are **never** passed on to third parties.



moneygiving

You can donate to Thembisa any time through Virgin Money Giving: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/> Search for 'Thembisa' under 'Find a charity'.