



THE THEMBISA TRUST

**Grassroots support
in South Africa**

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**Thembisa has
no political affiliation**

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about us



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projects



funding



events

Focus Project 2019



Mama Ntombi's Community Projects

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Thembisa Trust Walk and
Barbecue, Sunday 28 June 2020**

All profits will go directly to support projects

The WHY, WHAT and HOW

Tonia Cope Bowley,
Thembisa Trust Co-Founder



Did you know THEMBISA means 'to hold out hope'?

This is **WHY** the Trust got started in 1988. Back then, in the thick of South Africa's apartheid era, Stephen and I were in touch with small groups seeking to bring a chance to some caught in the poverty trap. We started doing then exactly **WHAT** the Trust does today – raising funds in the UK to support projects on the ground that are helping people help themselves. This is even more urgent today, as almost a third of working-age South Africans are unemployed. Most have not had educational opportunities to equip them for employment.



This year, on 30 June, we celebrated Thembisa's 31st birthday by holding our annual barbecue and walk, aiming to raise £2000. Surprise! Not only was the target exceeded but soon after, with the help of an unexpected large donation, we sent £4000 to MNCP, this year's focus project. This donation has enabled a dream to be turned into reality – building their own Community Centre in Ezinketheni, an impoverished area near Pietermaritzburg.

I spent May in South Africa. Exciting as it was to witness the elections and the tide slowly ebbing away from corruption, my visit to Ezinketheni was the highlight. Through the MNCP team's creativity, perseverance and love for the people there they are steadily and successfully uplifting 'one smiling child at a time' one day at a time, and impacting the whole community.

MNCP exemplifies Thembisa. The dream was, and is, big; the start small. Chris Pillay, MNCP's founder, grew up in the sugar plantations of Natal. His ambition to become an engineer proved unaffordable. Today, self-educated and in the building trade, he is steadily enabling others to fulfil their dreams. But, he says, Ezinketheni is only the beginning. There are many even poorer communities that need the opportunity to step out of poverty into self-sufficiency. Thembisa is standing with MNCP to keep on fulfilling this dream (see pages 4–7).

NOW IS THE TIME to grow the sapling Thembisa into a strong baobab tree. **HOW** does Thembisa work? By linking those in the UK with a heart for Africa with those who benefit from their support. If this describes you, then join us. Volunteering your talents and/or assisting financially will bring rich rewards – the joy of giving others a chance in life.

PS. Just as I finished writing this piece South Africa won the Rugby World Cup. See comments on this awesome achievement on page 7.

Project update



iThembalomntwana Pre-school

This pre-school opened in January 2018 under the auspices of African Enterprise with 40 pupils and now has 82 enrolled. The pre-school serves a vital function in the impoverished Edendale community, helping to prepare children aged 2 to 5 for primary school. In disadvantaged communities, once children start school there is an enormous difference in learning ability between those who have been at a pre-school and those who have not.

The pre-school is open from 06h45 to 15h30 (showing what early hours their carers have to keep). Breakfast is from 07h30 to

8h30, followed by teaching time and then play, lunch, sleeping and informative play. The pre-school is served by four teachers including the principal, as well as a cook, a caretaker and an admin/IT assistant. It is recognised by the Department of Education, and the teachers attend Department-run workshops. Only about 80% of the parents can afford the monthly fees of about £10. As there is no government funding iThembalomntwana is dependent on these fees together with donations.

The funds provided by Thembisa last year were used to build two toilets for the teachers and visiting adults.





MNCP: big dreams for the community



'Making a difference one smiling child at a time'

Founder and Chairman: Pastor Chris Pillay
Project Manager/Fundraiser: Sandra Pillay
Field worker: Solomon Quadi
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MamaNtombisCommunityProjects>
Website: <http://mncp.co.za>

Thembisa has contributed towards this project since around 2012. By then I had known Sandra for several years. At that point she resigned from her permanent post to join the small MNCP team where she'd been volunteering with other members of her church. Since then, little by little, MNCP has grown, and keeps on growing, a game-changer in two impoverished communities near Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Do watch the video on MNCP's Facebook site – it dates from 2015, but tells the story. Meantime below is a peephole into MNCP's amazing work.

In May this year Adam, Jade (my son and his wife) and I were treated to a hands-on MNCP weekend regular event. These photos give a flavour of how children (mostly orphans) and carers alike are welcomed, loved, fed and taught by Solomon. That day each child was presented with a warm jumper, knitted by a group in Johannesburg. This donation is an example of how MNCP raises awareness of situations and co-ordinates help offered.



Food parcel beneficiaries' achievements

Food security is a real issue. Many orphaned and neglected children are cared for by aged grannies (gogos), some of whom receive an MNCP food parcel every second month for a year. One criterion is that the beneficiaries start a sustainable project. Many already have flourishing food gardens, whilst others are poultry farming, sewing, baking and running informal shops, etc. Currently 24 people are receiving this practical kick-start support.



Singing group

We were treated to inspired singing by this small group trained by Pat Zondi (on the right in the photo above). After her husband died Pat became seriously ill, was unable to work and had sent her three children to live with her mother some distance away. When MNCP found her, she had lost all hope and was basically waiting to die. However, through their support she gradually recovered, was sent for training and provided with a coal stove enabling her to start her own successful bakery business. In addition she 'found her voice' and trained this church youth choir to a high standard. Happily she is reunited with her children.

Electric gates installed

MNCP's admin is carried out in an office in a high-risk area in central Pietermaritzburg. Unfortunately the poverty in South Africa means a high crime rate, and the offices have been burgled more than once. Previously, when arriving Sandra and Solomon had to get out of their cars and manually unlock and slide the gate open, then reverse the procedure once in/out – providing a prime opportunity for thieves and/or car hi-jackers to strike. Thanks to a grant which Bernwode News made to Thembisa, we were able to send funds so that a radio-controlled automatic gate could be installed.

Gogo Mkhize is one example. She was an alcoholic, but since MNCP provided her with a sewing machine she has been sewing uniforms for nurses at Northdale Hospital and also sews for community members. She has employed another person to help her, as her business is growing rapidly. She will soon be receiving a prefab container which will enable her to expand her business even further. Apart from her sewing business she also farms poultry. Each month she saves some money to purchase bricks so that she can build a decent house for her family.





MNCP's dreams for a new community centre with IT equipment

MNCP started out caring for the disadvantaged with love, but few other resources. Then one of the gogos offered her home as a meeting place. Some years later MNCP received a gift of a large shipping container. This was sited in the yard of another gogo and extended by creating a verandah to provide more space.

In May Tonia, Adam and Jade were shown land recently gifted outright to MNCP (thus avoiding any potential for future problems with loaned land) roughly the size of a football pitch. In October this year the land was prepared and the shipping container moved to this new site. The aim is to build a permanent building as a multifunctional community centre.

The new centre to be used for:

- Early Childhood Development programmes. Currently only 20 children are enrolled because of limited space. MNCP hope to increase the numbers significantly
- A Breakfast Club feeding desperately poor children, currently 300, but going forward MNCP anticipates feeding 500 to 600 every weekday morning once the hall is built. For many children it's the only substantial meal of the day, and it helps them to learn so much better.
- A Homework and Reading Club – restricted to 60 children currently.
- Mentorship programs for high school students.
- Community support programs and workshops.
- Media centre and library for children's computer research. Knowledge is wealth!

Pastor Chris explained: 'Access to information is non existent for these underprivileged children in this rural area. I want to equip this place with modern IT equipment so that internet access is available. This will be of great value to their education, bringing them up to speed in so far as knowledge is concerned. Educational programmes will be available to further equip them and prepare them for their exams. We will bring on board retired educators to help.'

The estimated cost for the new centre is less than £20,000. Through the generosity of Thembisa's donors, we have been able to contribute £6000 towards this cost enabling MNCP to level the land, build plinths and move the container to its new home, and start on aspects of the building.

Thembisa aims to raise funds to enable MNCP to complete this project. Can you help? Can you recommend businesses in the building trade or in IT who'd be interested in sponsoring this Community Centre? This will give many a chance in life.

South Africa's World Cup victory

From the moment South Africa became the rugby world champions no analytical stone has remained unturned in the search for answers to WHY, HOW and WHAT led to this achievement.

The recipe for a winner is:

LET'S ALL GIVE MORE 'RSA'

R – Respect

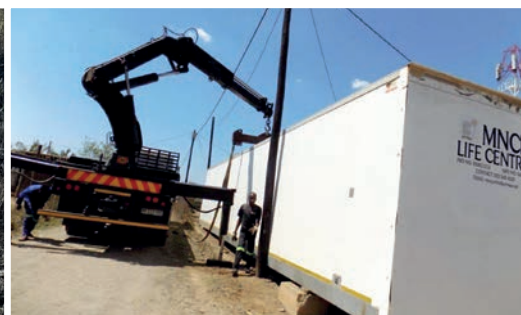
S – Support

A – Acceptance

The team, from all walks of life, some from very disadvantaged backgrounds, pulled together behind a common goal – not just to win a game, but to create a model of 'how we can build a better future' for South Africa. Their model includes discipline, determination, perseverance, hard work, and RSA for each other.

And do you know? This is how MNCP operates.

Do watch Siya Kolisi's story on <https://youtu.be/A6XGDsi3v4U>. A visible example of how 'changing the world one smiling child at a time' really can make a difference.



▶ Moving the container from its original site.



▶ Land and foundation preparation.



▶ Safely installed on the new site!



▶ The Breakfast Club: the first hungry children having their porridge at the new MNCP site before going to school. Sandra and her helpers were not properly set up but had to make a plan for these children as they couldn't allow them to go to school hungry.



▶ Learning is fun!



Project update



Chishawasha orphans' project

2019 has been a tough year for Zimbabwe, with a cyclone affecting 500,000 people in the south in April and then brutal crackdowns on peaceful protests and total freefall in the value of the currency.

Thembisa supports the Perekedza (meaning 'walking alongside') orphans' club, started by Maggie Norton for children in the Chishawasha area. This area was not affected by the cyclone and the project continued with fortnightly meetings at the property of Esnat, the childcare worker. The children receive life lessons and food packs when needed. Some of the young people have now gone on from the club to university or to jobs.

Mik Norton has also been training some of the children to grow vegetables and maize, and was thrilled earlier this year that many of the destitute families didn't need maize packs as the children were growing their own. Funds from Thembisa helped to pay for school fees and seed, fertilizer, etc. However, things have got

► *Natalie sent out an appeal to local friends for a pair of school shoes for the children for Christmas. The shoes bought last year have been well worn, due to the long distances the children have to walk to school and back.*

tougher. In October the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation warned that Zimbabwe faces extreme levels of food insecurity in 2020. Maggie writes:

'The hospitals have all but collapsed. Doctors have no drugs to give out and it's gut wrenching not to be able to help the hundreds of sick people pouring in. The

Chishawasha clinic is able to get only basics, so if any of the families on the register need medication, I take the prescriptions to our local pharmacy.

The orphans' club is being well run by Esnat and overseen by my friend Natalie. Mik is overseeing the farming and was so encouraged to see 52 children at the farming training on Saturday. We'd planned to put a roof on a shack next to Esnat's place for Perekedza to run from, but the economy is so dire that food security and help with health care are the priority.'

You can find Perekedza on facebook as 'Glen Lorne Orphans & Destitute Program'.



► *First onions of the harvest.*



Project update

Cross Over: emphasising the positive



► *Lessons can be out-of-doors in a pop-up classroom, or indoors.*

The mentors are devoted to the children in their groups. One mentor went to visit a child who was missing from school. The child had been forced to stay home while her family were away, as they had no lock for their property. The mentor paid for a lock from her own meagre resources so that

she was able to return to school.

Cross Over, an educational project, was started in 2007 by Deb Norton, who was touched by the plight of vulnerable children who had fallen out of the school system for various reasons. It provides high quality education to about 90 students and aims to share resources and the mentoring model so that communities can educate their own children. Mentors who teach the children in groups of up to 15 are drawn from the community and train in-house for 3-4 years, which equips them to start a teachers' training program. Cross Over's vision is to provide them with bursaries on condition that they return to Cross Over for 2 years once qualified.

Deb visited the UK this year to develop some curricula with volunteer teachers. In Zimbabwe most children have only ever experienced learning by rote and have never, for example, played games as part of learning. She had to explain to the UK teachers helping her that they could not ask children to bring items such as cereal boxes to school – they don't have such resources.





Project update

Masikhulisane

We continue to support the Masikhulisane Trust, which alleviates poverty and improves life chances in the Eastern Cape, in particular around Grahamstown. Many of their funds support educational projects, such as pre-schools or the GADRA matric school. The latter helps students with academic promise to improve their school-leaving results.

In addition, GADRA Education has worked with Rhodes University to improve teaching and mentoring in three local schools in disadvantaged areas. The result was a remarkable improvement in the matric results for the academic year ending December 2018.

Chris Mann, a Thembisa Advisor who has been a key part of Thembisa from its founding, reports that things are tough in Grahamstown. It's difficult to set up job creation projects because of the red tape required. The infrastructure such as sewage works is not being maintained and people in poorer areas suffer from a lack of water, housing, and refuse collection. There are regular electricity blackouts (not unique to Grahamstown).

Late Night Grahamstown Berg-wind Blues

Sleepless in the dark hours, I stumbled outside,
Heard a siren wailing as if somebody cried.
Hot wind from the mountains, huge dark starry sky,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?

Small town talk that morning – chain-store closing down,
Girl raped in a tavern, pipe-burst underground.
I saw a donkey grazing litter, honking at the sky,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Where to from here?

Sat down in the gutter, thought about the past,
Thought about the future, how long would it last.
Shadows searching trash-bins, street-child running by,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?

Same old news on the radio – brawls in parliament,
Rich folk big on money, poor folk on entitlement,
Two-faced preacher-men and politicians riding high,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Where to from here?

I smelt a whiff of jasmine drifting down the street,
Thought I'd write a love-poem, wash my lady's feet.
Strange and lovely things make calloused feelings cry,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?

Thought I saw sweet Jesus down an alleyway,
Breaking bread with beggars, made me want to pray.
Hot wind full of stardust, star-cross in the sky,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?

Oh, strange and lovely things help small town souls survive,
Strange and lovely things keep hope and love alive,
Hot wind from the mountains, huge bright starry sky,
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Why, why, why?
Some nights I can't sleep for asking, Where to from here?

© Chris Mann

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Ideas for raising funds for Thembisa

Many companies allocate funds for charity – could you ask if your workplace would support Thembisa? (Registered Charity No: 801978) If you need information to support a request, just let us know!

Most of us have so much materially. Why

not suggest that your friends give donations to Thembisa in lieu of birthday/anniversary (or even Christmas) presents?

You can raise funds when shopping online. Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk, put 'Thembisa Trust' in the search box. We've raised more than £240 so far at no cost to us!



Project update

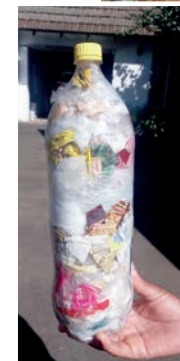
Building materials from waste

Carol Cassidy and Julian and Sarah Dottridge run the Sweetwaters Bonginkosi self-help project in a very impoverished semi-rural area of KwaZulu Natal. The project aims to give a hand up to local people through micro businesses, crafts, food gardens, and educational initiatives. Carol wrote as follows:

'Thank you very much indeed for the donation of £500. There are ongoing needs and new ones surfacing like the replacement to our truck.

'We have been buying eco-bricks (plastic bottles filled with plastic waste) from this poor community for another community that is making structures using them. This has taken off in a big way and become quite costly, so much so, that we may have to limit the production. The project is helping to clean up the environment from plastic pollution and some women are delighted to have a little money of their own.

'Each week we sell basic provisions at cost and some have worked out that they can purchase and then sell the bars of washing soap at a small profit—this also helps them! Next month we will be packing the Christmas hampers for our members.



comprising toiletries like soap, toothpaste, face-cloths etc. Last year they LOVED their Christmas hampers, bought in great measure by Thembisa's kind donors. Our spring rains have not really started but we also hope to supply seed potatoes and other vegetable seeds for their domestic use.'

Phathakge-Madiba Home

In 2018 we started funding the Phathakge-Madiba Care Home in Tembisa township near Johannesburg. It is actually the house of Rebecca Phathakge and her daughter Lerato, who over 20 years have taken in hundreds of destitute people of all races on a temporary or long-term basis. Gavin Fischer, a BBC journalist in Johannesburg, noticed that extra rooms have been added, turning a two-bedroom house into a space for up to 30 people. But the work had been shoddy, and often unfinished.

Thembisa Trust sent funds which enabled the home to improve the bathrooms and the hot water cylinder, install ceiling panels, paint some rooms, and buy a cooker. The cooker has made a particular difference to their ability to feed the residents.

Funding has served its purpose of improving the accommodation, and will therefore end. Furthermore, Gavin has now returned to the UK, so we no longer have a local contact person reporting back to us (a requirement for project support).



Project funding April 2018 – August 2019

Project / Organisation	Location	Amount
Masikhulisane Trust Supporting educational projects and job creation	Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	£1,850
Sweetwaters Bonginkosi Self-help Project Blanket making and other skills, help as needed	Sweetwaters, KwaZulu-Natal	£15600
Chishawasha Orphans Includes provision of care and teaching life skills	Zimbabwe	£2,550*
Cross Over Educational programme	Zimbabwe	£1,070
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects (MNCP) Supporting the community, in particular vulnerable children, in two informal settlements	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal	£9850*
Rebecca Phathakges Home Housing homeless people	Tembisa township, Gauteng	£1760*
iThembalomntwana Pre-school Educational programme	Edendale KwaZulu-Natal	£2460
Total		£20,410

* Included donations earmarked for these projects

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.

Special thanks to Orbis Investments,
The Souter Charitable Trust and Bernwode
News for large donations earmarked for
Mama Ntombi's Community Projects.



moneygiving

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

Thembisa's 2019 barbecue and walk

On Sunday 30 June 2019 we gathered as usual in the beautiful garden at Ferndale, the home of Tonia Cope Bowley, for a barbecue. This was preceded by a local walk for the more energetic among us! The weather was kind, the food and company good, and Tonia updated us with news from her visit to South Africa in May. Thank you to all who supported the event or sent donations!

Join us for our next barbecue on
Sunday 28 June 2020.

