



1

Annual Report – Phedišang

Year ended 28 February 2006

Objectives

The Phedišang project was created in search of a good model for caring for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's). It was set up as a joint venture of the local community (in and around Enable village in Maruleng municipality in Limpopo Province) and The McLean Trust. Working with community input, 3 kitchens opened in August 2003.

The basis of Phedišang rests on four points :

- Leave the children where they want to be, within the broader family network and community;
- Feed them twice a day, before and after they go to crèche or school;
- Liaise and interact with the health authorities to ensure that they are receiving required medical care;
- Collect all the documentation and attend to the bureaucratic processes to ensure that the children receive the grants provided by the South African Government

The following definition is applied by Phedišang:

¹ More information :

Phedišang – Help them to live

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Orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) – children whose care is compromised as a result of the illness or death of an adult (co-resident or not) who contributed to the care and/or financial support of the child.

Project Progress

The work and effort in Phedišang in the year ended February 2006 was focussed on consolidating what had been achieved at the pilot project in and around Enable. At the end of the year, this led to opening a new Phedišang hub with 2 kitchens attached to it in the adjacent area of Sekororo.

Specifically, it encompassed:

- Holding a large Pitšo (a command performance community meeting) for over 400 people on 7 June 2005. The Pitšo was attended by the Mayor of Maruleng, traditional leaders, church leaders, school teachers, representatives from the Limpopo Department of Social Welfare, foster carers, children (OVC's) and committee members and workers from Phedišang and The McLean Trust. After addresses by some of the dignitaries, the session was treated to a detailed question and answer session about the nature of and issues arising from Phedišang. After closing formalities, there was a presentation of donated gifts to many children and Phedišang centres, followed by lunch for everyone.
- A new manual was prepared based on experience at Phedišang Enable for developing and rolling out new Phedišang hubs and centres.
- Maria Kgabo, board member of Phedišang, as well as co-ordinator for the Enable hub, was invited to attend and present Phedišang at an international conference in Kampala on the subject of OVC's created in the wake of the Aids pandemic. She was sponsored by World Education, an American organisation and for very little cost to Phedišang, Maria was able to attend this conference in Kampala in early February 2006.
- The Phedišang Board was constituted, comprising representatives from The McLean Trust, the communities served by Phedišang and business professionals in Johannesburg. The first Board Meeting was held in December 2005.
- The Johannesburg side of Phedišang was re-structured and re-organised. Fundraising and Delivery were separated into distinct areas, organised by sub-committees. This seems to be working better than it was, with greater links to the Phedišang hubs and centres in Limpopo.
- Interaction with the Department of Social Welfare, Provincial Government: Limpopo continued and some court orders leading to the foster care grants were obtained. Progress in this area is too slow for the executive committee, who need to devote more attention to this in the year ahead.

Delivery Sub-Committee

Closer interaction from Johannesburg with the Phedišang hubs was instituted and maintained through the year, resulting in significant achievements:

- The system of registering the children and maintaining an accurate register and number of children at all the centres was improved on and donor funding was used to purchase computers to make this better and easier. This allowed children to be taken onto the program who were waiting without being properly taken care of by Phedišang; thus extending the reach of Phedišang to all OVC's in the villages serviced by Phedišang centres.
- Thanks to a corporate donor, water was obtained by their rehabilitating the borehole at one of the centres. The community contributed digging of the trenches for pipes and the government provided tanks for water at the Phedišang centre at the local primary school. With water at this centre it makes a vegetable garden a possibility and some volunteers are helping the local committee at this centre to create a vegetable garden, which will supplement food provided by the Phedišang kitchen.
- Surplus agricultural produce was also sourced and distributed, as was firewood, to all Phedišang centres.
- Connection was made with the German Youth Organisation, GSAYA, who provide volunteers for community service in South Africa. A volunteer will help with putting in place systems and improving the quality of care at Phedišang centres, as well as interaction with the government and office administration.
- The opening and setting up of the Phedišang hub at Sekororo with computers and establishing registers as well as buying the equipment required and starting the kitchens in the 2 centres at Moshate and Mankgonyane.

Fundraising Sub-Committee

The fundraising effort of donations by way of debit orders from individuals continues and more approaches to corporates are being undertaken. Systems in the U.S.A. have been set up via the S.A. Development Fund, and Phedišang helps there effectively used this channel to remit cash to South Africa for the organisation. A similar system in the U.K. was also initiated. There was ongoing loyal and committed support from other South African individual donors, which was vital in ensuring the continued work of Phedišang.

Specifically fundraising achievements were:

- A substantial donation from Johnnic Communication Limited which was applied to many Phedišang needs – primarily paying the shortfall of feeding of OVC's at the centres as well as taking on many OVC's on the waiting list to join Phedišang. The JohnCom donation funded the set-up costs for Phedišang Sekororo, as well as contributing to the initial feeding of OVC's at these 2 centres until other donor funding is raised.
- Imperial Logistics visited Phedišang and offered to help with some specific projects there. They helped repair the water pump in the borehole at Worcester centre (as described above) and made water a possibility for that centre. They have also helped with donations of firewood as well as making a substantial cash donation to Phedišang.
- Following a generous donation from the First Rand Foundation late in 2005, the Wesbank Fund again made a generous donation to supplement Phedišang coffers and feed OVC's.
- Much of the Phedišang literature was re-vamped, resulting in a new application profile as well as a modular set of documents, which can be easily used in different combinations, as called for in corporate applications.
- The fundraising sub-committee put a great deal of effort into planning events to be held during the year to come.

Government Interaction

The interaction continued and some court orders were obtained, but as is mentioned above this was too few in number for the year and attention needs to be focussed in this area.

Things To Do

Following the opening of the second Phedišang hub at Sekororo, the following need to be implemented:

- Improvement in afternoon activities at all centres. This involves establishing systems for activities including sports, games and working and playing on computers. These will be set up by volunteers, but once established, the activities should continue with minimal intervention, and include systems of mentoring and monitoring by older children. The aim is to make the value of participating in Phedišang way beyond what the foster carers of the OVC's pay for it.

- Research can be conducted in other villages in Phedišang Sekororo with a view to opening further centres when donor funding becomes available.
- Production of reliable numbers on a regular basis by all hubs, which can be used in interaction with government to ensure and hasten the process of obtaining court orders and foster care grants.
- Ensuring that OVC's in respect of whom the foster care grant is being received continue to attend Phedišang and that the Phedišang amount is paid by the foster carers out of the grant money (R100= out of R590= per child monthly).

Leigh McLEAN
Project Manager
May 2006