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Annual Report Year ended 28 February 2007

Objectives

The Phedišang project was established to care for orphans and vulnerable children. It is based in the Maruleng municipality in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Phedišang aims to provide the nurturing and caring that these children miss in their lives. It has been established as an organ of the community, funded by private donors (individuals, corporates and non-governmental organisations – both foreign and South African); and the South African government.

Phedišang is built on four pillars:

- 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.

¹ More information :

Phedišang – Help them to live

Board: P.L.A. Davis, M.M. Kgabo, E.M. Letty, L. Mphahlele, P. Ramsey

Executive Committee: L.S. McLean, T.E. Corder, J. Oosthuizen

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Project Progress

For the year ended February 2007, Phedišang focused on consolidating the second administrative hub established at Sekororo. This included making improvements in the operations of both hubs (Enable and Sekororo) to create a more integrated, leaner organisation.

In particular, the following areas received attention during the year under review:

- Verifying that all protocols and procedures are effective across the expanded organisation. This ensures that information emanating from the operational offices in Limpopo is accurate, meaningful and useful to the central Phedišang office, which in turn can relay that information to the wider Phedišang community including stakeholders and donors.
- Forging relationships with volunteer organizations which co-ordinate the activities of volunteers.
- Ensuring that the directives of the Phedišang board are implemented, and then reporting back to the board to enable it to exercise effective governance.
- Interacting with the many South African corporate bodies that have become supporters, based on Phedišang's track record for spending money effectively.
- Improving foreign efforts at fundraising and links with organisations in foreign countries – specifically the United Kingdom, United States of America and Germany.
- Continuing to interact with government at all levels, including regular meetings with officials at provincial and district level as well as social workers on the ground.

Activities

The main focus of work at Phedišang in the year under review was consolidation of the administrative hubs and centres in Limpopo. This was managed by the delivery sub-committee based in Gauteng, with many and varied contributions from members.

The specific achievements in Limpopo included:

- Two volunteers each spent several fruitful months at Phedišang. They were:

Michaela Leiss, from the German South African Youth Association (GSAYA), lived in Enable village for three months from May to August 2006. Michaela worked in the Enable hub, re-energising and motivating the staff. This led to a staff shake-up, and the appointment of a new facilitator, Ms Charity Monyela. Michaela was indefatigable, pushing to achieve what had been mandated in government-related activities, including processing a backlog of applications for foster care grants; distribution of donated goods and implementation of afternoon activities. Michaela firmly established the playing of several games at all four of the Enable Centres, even inventing a game for younger children titled 'Fireball'. **Christy Hotard**, from the US Peace Corps, has been living in Turkey village since September 2006. Christy has integrated well into both administrative hubs and all Phedišang centres so that she has become part of the fabric of Phedišang Limpopo. Apart from on-going improvements on the ground in Limpopo, Christy does a great deal to enhance the liaison between the Johannesburg office and the activities there.

- Phedišang has developed from being merely a feeding scheme, with health and grant activities attached, into becoming a more nurturing, supportive environment for the orphans under its care. This welcome development can be mainly attributed to the hard work of the resident volunteers. The volunteers have implemented sports, indoor games and the use of toys to make the Phedišang experience richer for all children involved.

However, some foster parents resist the longer time the children spend at Phedišang. The local committee has worked to hard to explain to them that while it is essential that the children continue to do their household chores, they also need to be allowed to be children and spend time in games and other activities at the Phedišang centres.

- Administrative staff at the two hubs now maintain more accurate attendance records, thus enabling better investigation of the reasons for absence. The accurate statistics are then fed back to the Johannesburg office and made available to the wider Phedišang community, including donors.

- Older children have been entrusted with responsibilities and duties in the Phedišang centres, supervising certain activities and nurturing younger children. Some children who are beyond the cut-off age for Phedišang (16 years old) have been employed as helpers and carers in return for a meal.
- Vegetable gardens have been established at places where there is sufficient water, creating a co-operative effort between Phedišang and members of the community, who then share the produce from these gardens. Some Phedišang children have become involved in these vegetable gardens as well.

Fundraising Efforts

Fundraising activities in the year under review were directed by a small team in Johannesburg. Specific activities included:

- Dr. Anna Kanarek, a member of the Phedišang board resident in Boston, held a major event at her home catered by a celebrity chef. This extremely successful project raised \$25 000. These funds underpinned the work of Phedišang through the year in conjunction with South African corporate contributions.
- Loyal individual South African donors continue to be the backbone of Phedišang, with their monthly contribution representing a vital ongoing source of revenue.
- The First Rand Group entrenched its ongoing support of Phedišang with another generous contribution, which was matched by a similar contribution from ABSA and Investec banks.
- Imperial Logistics again made Phedišang a beneficiary of its Charity Golf Day, which delivered substantial financial support. Directors and members of staff then managed a visit and a huge in-kind donation of food, clothes and toys – all delivered locally in Limpopo, which greatly adds to their value.
- A generous contribution from the Anglo American Chairman's fund and support from many South African individuals in response to a crisis call from the board at a stage when funding seemed to dry up.
- A function held in Dubai by the South African expatriate community resulted in much individual support from those donors.

Government Interaction

Phedišang felt the negative effects of a reorganisation of the Department of Social Development. The social workers with whom good working relationships had been established were transferred to the Mpumalanga provincial structure, while Phedišang fell into the Mopani district of Limpopo, based in Giyani. This move had several unfortunate consequences, including bureaucratic confusion, loss of files, papers and records, to say nothing of lost momentum. With some difficulty, Phedišang has adapted to the new status quo and has made good progress in continuing to work productively with government:

- To date, 75 foster care grants have been obtained fully or partially through the effort and help of Phedišang. The foster care grant when Phedišang was established in 2003 was R490 per child per month. This has now increased to R640 per month. This money is paid to the foster parent appointed by court order. This equates to R48,000 per month going into the community for the benefit of the orphans.
- Convincing the foster parents to continue to send the orphans to Phedišang and part with the monthly R100 per child fee has been more difficult. Many foster parents, when faced with the straight ultimatum from Phedišang, choose not to send the children to the Phedišang centres and to keep the full R640 per month. However, some are beginning to see the value of Phedišang and have begun to pay the required fee. The Phedišang staff continues to monitor orphans in respect of whom the grant has been received and to report the abuse of funds or the neglect of orphans to the Department of Social Development for follow-up.
- The Provincial Government has made progress in providing feeding and caring initiatives in the area serviced by Phedišang, including food parcels for families caring for orphans and improved clinic services. Phedišang continues to monitor the state's programmes to ensure that its initiatives are complementary with them, and that the overall mix of programmes benefits the orphans.

Future Plans

The year ahead needs to be one of consolidation, with a special emphasis on the following projects:

- **Consolidation of the afternoon activities at all centres:** Although huge strides were made in 2007, there is still room for improvement. In particular better monitoring of activities and more storage will enable more than one activity to happen in the centres at the same time (e.g. some children playing on the computer and some involved in outdoor games). Sport, including inter-centre sport tournaments, also needs more development.
- **Expanding our reach:** We must continue to interact with foster parents to convince them that it is in the best interest of their charges to attend Phedišang, and that the fee should be paid.
- **Maximizing value from our volunteers:** We must improve our ability to give volunteers meaningful work to do so that they can make a clear contribution. This will be the benefit of both parties, and is more likely to result in return volunteering.
- **Fundraising:** By involving more people in fundraising and reaching a broader audience, we can realistically aim to increase sponsorships, placing the project on a firmer footing and eventually permitting expansion.

In conclusion, and on behalf of everyone connected with Phedišang, our sincere thanks to all our sponsors and supporters. We continue to believe that this is valuable work that is contributing to a better country – thank you for helping it to continue.

**Leigh McLean
Project Manager
August 2007**