



Annual Report Year ended 28 February 2009

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 the necessary 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.

Project Progress

For the year ended February 2009, Phedišang focused on strengthening and consolidating the operations in Limpopo. This led to a more established organisation there – providing consistent, organised, ongoing care, with meals, afternoon activities and reporting all smoothly and reliably done. An average of 420 children were cared for in the six villages in which Phedišang operates.

Phedišang – Help them to live

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

- Management of the Limpopo office was consolidated. Following the detection of a minor fraud, the guilty parties were thoroughly but fairly investigated, disciplined and dismissed. Nearly all the money was recovered and the two hubs were consolidated into a single Limpopo office, which has proved to be more accountable and effective.
- Strong links with volunteer organisations were maintained -- the first US Peace Corps volunteer concluded her service, but has been replaced in situ by a second volunteer who has been most effective through the year. Many volunteers from other organisations were effectively deployed in Limpopo.
- The fabric of the centres has been improved. All six centres now have cooking shelters making it practical to prepare meals for 365 days a year.
- Transport and logistics both from Johannesburg to Limpopo, and within Limpopo, both of which were fraught and problematic, have been managed and smoothed.
- Relations with the South African government have been consolidated on a good footing, with direct support for some local operations.
- Relations with traditional leaders and local communities have been strengthened and improved.
- Links with South African and international donors and fundraisers have been maintained and fostered by arranging for them to visit Phedišang Limpopo.
- The Phedišang board has been fully informed and involved by project management and remains in close, careful control of activities.

Activities

This year, the focus at Phedišang included work in getting the Limpopo office streamlined, established and operational. This involved appointing a manager and a senior financial administrator, and then supporting them with further capacity in the form of two facilitators, who provide daily supervision at the centres.

All activities were done with the help, support and supervision of the two US Peace Corps volunteers. The first of these, Christy Hotard, worked as acting manager for the first few months of the year. Christy had the unenviable task of discovering the fraud perpetrated by hub workers at the Sekororo hub, investigating and supervising the disciplinary action. The disciplinary hearing was conducted by the committee in Limpopo and Board members.



Following this, the two offices were consolidated into a single office and manned by the two remaining staff members from the Enable hub. The job description of manager was refined, and both candidates were interviewed for the position. Charity Monyela was appointed as Manager: Limpopo and Suzan Mogale was appointed Senior Financial Administrator in the office.

Nick Redding, the second US Peace Corps volunteer, supervised the construction and completion of cooking shelters at all six of the Phedišang centres. He also acted as a support to the management and was part of the grooming, interviewing and selection process. He has continued to act as mentor and builder of the management team in Limpopo, enabling them to run the office and the operation smoothly and effectively, only asking for help when needed.

Specific achievements in Limpopo included:

- A driver was engaged to perform or transport tasks between centres and to and from the neighbouring towns (Hoedspruit and Tzaneen) on a per-trip basis, paid by the Johannesburg office. After a false start, the arrangement has been working satisfactorily since September.
- Nick helped the staff to clean and tidy all centres and to provide homework stations at each centre. These homework stations provide a quiet area with desks and chairs dedicated to helping schoolchildren do what they have to.
- Relations with local Hoedspruit farmers were re-established and made part of the management team's ongoing responsibilities. This has meant many donations of produce, as well as help with food and equipment.
- Nick had already established a working computer set-up at each centre, which was being actively used by children there. He then organised an application to Dell (South Africa) and has obtained a donation of two new desktop computers per centre. Improved security at many centres was necessary, and has been done to a uniform standard at all of them.
- Many volunteers from other countries and from South Africa visited Phedišang and with the co-ordinated input and direction from local management in Limpopo were able to achieve a great deal. Highlights included:
 - Visit by four young Germans: Sebastian Wunderlich, and Sebastian Bekker, Gerdis Marquardt and Melanie Kirsch They had carefully researched and prepared HIV/AIDS workshops which were conducted with the Phedišang children.
 - A second working party of 18 high school girls from Roedean School (South Africa) visited Phedišang in August. They did constructive painting and decoration of the interior of the centres, as well as many activities with the Phedišang children. Part of the arrangements for the 'work week' included the selection of leaders from the children at each centre. This worked so well that Nick Redding made a special



application to the US Peace Corps for an extra (VAST) grant to fund a leaders program. This has been approved and the program will be rolled out over the next year.

- A group of students from CIDA City Campus in Johannesburg visited and conducted workshops with Phedišang children offering career guidance, mentoring and life skills. They also brought with them atlases, dictionaries and other equipment. This was a seminal and most successful intervention in helping Phedišang children to broaden their horizons. (CIDA is a much admired university with a difference - for more information, please visit www.cida.co.za .)
- This partnership has been expanded by the acceptance of one of the children, Tebatso Mauwane, into CIDA's bridging program starting in February 2009.
- The second map mural was completed with the help of Christy's sisters, Katie and Theresa Hotard, and Megan Owen – all co-ordinated by Christy.
- A chance meeting with senior management at Pick 'n Pay, Hoedspruit resulted in regular donations of produce, salad and perishable goods to Phedišang. Limpopo management continues to maintain the relationship.
- The South African agent for Staedtler stationery, Heneways, gave a huge and generous donation of mis-packaged and surplus stationery which was more than welcome at Phedišang

Fundraising Efforts

Fundraising activities in the year under review were mainly focused in Johannesburg. The specific activities included:

- Further donations and visits from the Anglo-American Chairman's fund and ABSA Bank (South Africa).
- Visits and investigation by Imperial Logistics, resulting in a commitment to an ongoing relationship on a more structured basis. This financial support is truly complemented by much support in the form of donations and transport of goods to Limpopo.
- Generous contribution by the Stephen Lewis Foundation in Canada funded specific activities at Phedišang. Ongoing discussions, and detailed reporting requirements have meant a robust relationship and, hopefully, longer-term support for Phedišang.
- Fun Day graciously hosted by Roedean School in Johannesburg, generated over R 50,000

- Raffle of exquisite jewellery suite donated by Charles Greig Jewellers in Johannesburg (featuring stones donated by Susan McLean) raised over R 80,000
- Feedback to and communication with individual donors was greatly facilitated by regular and informative newsletters. These and word of mouth generated many varied contributions.
- Many companies, including online wine merchant Winex, made donations.
- Private donors continue to support Phedišang, with two even specifying donations to Phedišang in lieu of wedding gifts!
- Phedišang was signed up on the MySchool programme, in terms of which a small percentage of purchases at participating vendors is transferred to the beneficiary school.

Government Interaction

Phedišang continued to work with all levels of the provincial Department of Social Development, and relations between Phedišang and the South African government in general are on a better footing than they have been. The total number of grants, which have been obtained partly through Phedišang's efforts as at the end of February 2009, is 154. This means that 40 new grants were obtained during the year under review. The foster care grant paid by the South African government is now R650, so this is a tidy contribution to cash funds available in the local community.

In addition, the following significant developments happened during the year:

- Maria Kgabo managed to obtain government funding (paid during September 2008) for support of the orphans and vulnerable children at four of the six Phedišang centres. This application was handled by Enable ADP, a parallel community organisation. Negotiations between Leigh McLean and the committee of Enable ADP (overseen by Board member, Pru Ramsey) led to the payment of stipends for workers (carers, cooks) at these four centres and a substantial contribution to the purchase of food.
- Phedišang has made its own application for the same government support and funding of orphans and vulnerable children for all six centres. We hope and expect that this direct government support of Phedišang will kick in during the next year.
- A chance social meeting with the local chief's sister, the Kgadi, resulted in a formal tea between Leigh, some donors, Phedišang staff and the Kgadi. In turn this led to greater cooperation between traditional leaders and Phedišang, and an endorsement of Phedišang by the traditional authorities.



Future Plans

In the year ahead, Phedišang Limpopo must continue to operate smoothly and efficiently. The possible addition of more drop-in centres depends on obtaining donor funding to continue supporting Phedišang, as well as a commitment to those centres.

Other future direct plans include the following:

- **Improvement of Johannesburg office**, which is moving from Leigh McLean's office to that of an associated organisation and much bigger non-governmental organization -- the Aurum Institute. The purpose of this move is to help ensure that the administrative functions of Phedišang continue to be properly performed, and that liaison with donors and funders is improved. (The Aurum Institute was promulgated as an independent, not-for-profit Public Benefit Organisation in 2005. For more information, please visit www.auruminstitute.org .)
- **Establishment of a computer/resource centre and library at the office in Limpopo** to give Phedišang children computer experience and access to the Internet; including information about tertiary educational institutions, and facilitating applications to these. We aim to link Phedišang to the outside world, and ensure that school-leaving Phedišang children are able to compete with others on an equal basis.
- **Continuation of marketing efforts of Phedišang to the local communities and civic and traditional leaders**, stressing to them what has been and is being achieved by Phedišang, and what they can do to help Phedišang to flourish.
- **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. This would include making sure that current donor relations are well maintained and that ongoing funding of Phedišang is more stable.

In conclusion, our thanks to all supporters of Phedišang both foreign and South African, charities, corporates and individuals. We believe we are doing valuable work in helping a vulnerable group of children to get a better start in life, and hope we may continue to count on the support of our valued donors - both current and future!

Leigh McLean
Project Manager
April 2009