



Annual Report Year ended 28 February 2010

Objectives

The Phedišang project was established to care for orphans and vulnerable children and 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.

Phedišang currently operates seven centres that serve some 500 orphaned or vulnerable children.

Highlights

For the year ended February 2010, Phedišang focused on consolidating on previous achievements, strengthening the organisation, and continuing to be an integral part of the community in Limpopo. A proud moment was when the Limpopo Manager and her team organised and executed the official opening our seventh centre, in the village of Molalane. Phedišang cares for over 500 children daily in the seven villages in which it now operates.

Phedišang – Help them to live

www.phedisang.org

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Another significant milestone was that the South African Government became the major funder of Phedišang on an ongoing basis. Getting into line with Government requirements has meant some operational changes, which your board has approved. The recognition and status that this development brings is significant, and makes this project truly sustainable (see below for more details). Donor funding is still vital for on-going improvements of the project, development of new centres in villages where children are not being cared for, and to act as a "safety net" if Government funding is delayed.

During the year under review, the following areas received attention:

- The Limpopo office has now assumed management control of all local operations, including the routine care and feeding of children on an ongoing basis, and administration and reports. It has once again moved location and is housed as an interim measure at Phedišang Turkey centre.
- We maintained strong links with volunteer organisations. The second US Peace Corps volunteer, Nick Redding, completed his final term of service, and Roede School ran a worthwhile project.
- We decided to recognise the strong relationships we have built up with two donors by naming centres in their honour. The new centre in Molalane is now known as the Merison-Molalane Drop-In Centre. We would also like to acknowledge our gratitude for the regular monthly donation of a large amount of basic food delivered to Phedišang by Tiger Brands Ltd by naming the Butswana Centre the Tiger Brands–Butswana Drop-In Centre. We thank these donors for their help and look forward to working with them into the future.
- This year we established a Leaders' Program to develop our older children by imparting skills and setting ambitious goals for them. A generous donation of computer equipment from Dell Corporation (South Africa) was of huge assistance with this programme.
- The Phedišang Johannesburg office moved into a building occupied by a "cousin organisation", The Aurum Institute. Aurum has very generously donated the space and use of its facilities.
- As always, our volunteers supported us magnificently throughout the year by helping perform tasks at Phedišang Central and, of course, continual fundraising.
- The McLean Trust agreed to fund the salary of a project manager to take over Leigh McLean's role. The Trust continues to work on ways to improve project performance and enhance sustainability.
- Individual donors generously stepped forward to help Phedišang children who are studying at tertiary educational institutions.
- The Phedišang board has been fully informed and involved by project management and remains in close, careful control of activities.

Activities

Two main activities were undertaken this year: the consolidation of the Phedišang Limpopo office, and setting up the new Johannesburg office, or Phedišang Central. Nick Redding, the US Peace Corps volunteer, made an enormous contribution to both these activities. By working closely with the Project Manager, Leigh McLean, he was able to implement changes and direct operations, act as a second opinion and sounding board, and also test the efficacy of activities and interventions on the ground.

In Limpopo, the specific activities included:

- Consolidation and improvement of the efficiency and functioning of the office and management team. A highly significant development was the introduction of the concept of accountability—something that is all too rare in so many development, donor-funded and non-governmental agencies. The Limpopo Manager is thus held accountable for what happens in Phedišang Limpopo, and she in turn holds her staff accountable.
- Efficient and smooth functioning of the seven Phedišang centres: food is always cooked and available for the children, workstations are equipped, computer activities occur daily, and instruction and practice continues. As important, games and other fun activities remain a staple of the children's lives.
- We opened a new centre when a Netherlands company, Merison BV, indicated interest in funding it. The new centre is located in Molalane village, where we found that nothing was being done for orphans and vulnerable children. Our staff approached the local village chief and the crèche committee to establish a seventh Phedišang centre. Having obtained that agreement, they set about counting eligible children, and then organising, commissioning and launching the centre on 5 August 2009. This means that a further 67 children are being given the full extent of Phedišang care and nurturing. It also demonstrates Phedišang's internal capacity.
- The Limpopo provincial government, specifically the Department of Social Development has recognised Phedišang, and the work it is doing. Phedišang was encouraged to apply for government support, and having made applications was granted the support and funding. The government has insisted on many specific reporting requirements, which the office in Limpopo has managed to do satisfactorily.
- A loyal Johannesburg donor managed to promote the link between Phedišang and Tiger Brands Ltd, which resulted in a visit from its management, followed by a commitment to a monthly donation of groceries delivered to Phedišang in Maruleng, Limpopo for distribution amongst all seven centres. This has helped enormously, not only with the provision of much-needed foodstuff, but by reducing the expense of transport.

- Phedišang donors have continued to support the tertiary education of two suitable school leavers. The Phedišang office does some intervention and assistance in channelling this support, in the same way as parents would for a promising child. It is important not to do this at a cost to the other 500 children, but it is something that does need to be undertaken. The first Phedišang student has completed requirements for graduating with the Bachelor of Science degree, and one other is embarked on first-year business studies at CIDA University in Johannesburg.
- Work with the older children, the seniors at each Phedišang centre, was formalised into a Leaders' Program by Nick Redding, assisted by the two Phedišang facilitators, Hazel Shai and Olga Masete. Nick obtained US Government funding for this program, which has operated successfully through the year teaching a relatively small group of children life skills, community responsibility and personal skills and values. It focused on broadening the horizons of all the children, and culminated in successful expeditions to the Hoedspruit military airbase and a three-night expedition to Johannesburg. A loyal Phedišang donor, the Stephen Lewis Foundation of Canada, has committed ongoing support to this programme.
- The third school party of 18 girls from Roedean School in Johannesburg spent a five-day residential project in Limpopo helping Phedišang. Against the background of some cholera outbreaks in Southern Africa, and the importance of hygiene which had already been highlighted by a nurse visiting the project, Tamara Redding, the girls worked on the donation of hand-washing stations to each centre. They researched the importance of hand-washing and were able to establish a connection between hand-washing and the cultural practice of the communal eating of food with the hands. Phedišang designed the stations and they were commissioned and donated by Roedean. The schoolgirls then taught the leaders from each centre about the importance of washing one's hands under running water. Hand-washing is now a practice before each meal at Phedišang. The Roedean girls also donated and planted a tree at each centre, which is watered by the waste-water generated by the washing station. In all, it was the most successful, sustainable intervention.
- The Phedišang office in Limpopo is now connected to the Internet via wireless. This development has made it much easier for the office to fulfil its regular management tasks, and to keep in contact with the global Phedišang community.

In Johannesburg, the Phedišang office moved into new premises at The Aurum Institute (www.auruminstitute.org). Aurum generously provides these offices and facilities at cost. Furniture was donated by the McLean family. In addition, several volunteers have offered to help with specific aspects of Phedišang's operation, including accounting and administration and fundraising.

The most significant development for Phedišang Central (Johannesburg) was the intervention of our parent, the McLean Trust, which underwrote the cost of a paid project manager to take over from Leigh McLean. As if by divine providence, Judy Bassingthwaight appeared, available and ready to take on the task. She has been employed as project manager since November 2009, and the fruits of her many efforts are about to become apparent.

Fundraising

Fundraising activities in the year under review were initiated from Johannesburg. Specific activities included:

- Conclusion of an agreement with the Stichting Merison Foundation of The Netherlands to fund a new centre, the Merison-Molalane Phedišang Centre. The Foundation will also contribute to the operating cost of Phedišang Limpopo for three years. Merison has more than honoured its commitment.
- A commitment to a substantial in-kind donation of foodstuffs from Tiger Brands Ltd, delivered to Phedišang on a monthly basis. This followed a visit by responsible management from Tiger Brands, and project management has agreed to name one centre in honour of Tiger Brands in gratitude for this ongoing contribution. The renaming and opening ceremony will be held during the next year.
- We were fortunate to receive further substantial donations as well as visits from both ABSA Bank and Imperial Logistics. We much value these relationships. Imperial Logistics also provides us with invaluable assistance with the transportation of food between the centres.
- Following an initial donation by the Stephen Lewis Foundation of Toronto, Canada, the Foundation indicated that it would be in a position to renew support for Phedišang for specific activities, in this case food and transport. No sooner had an agreement on exactly which activities been reached, than the South African government stepped in and took over the funding of some of these activities. The Foundation demonstrated enormous tolerance and flexibility and asked Phedišang to find alternative projects for support. In addition to continuing their previous support for monitoring and reporting visits from Johannesburg, they have agreed to support the Leaders' Program in 2010 as well as help provide teaching aids (calculators and dictionaries to senior students). In addition, the Stephen Lewis Foundation has also most generously stepped in to fund basic foodstuffs that should have been paid for by the government, as funding seems to have dried up for fiscal 2010.
- Relations with, and feedback to donors is imperative, and to this end the website (maintained for free by a generous donor); the DVD (both visuals and voice over donated by professionals); and the newsletter compiled by Phedišang staff and volunteers, are all vital. In addition several donors have visited Phedišang in Limpopo and have largely been impressed by activity there.
- Many companies and private individuals continue to be the backbone of regular Phedišang funding, for which we are truly grateful. These come in the form of annual donations and monthly debit orders.



- Phedišang is increasingly realising the benefit of being part of the MySchool programme, which donates a proportion of money spent at participating stores to the organization. We have also registered with the online charity support portal, Back-a-Buddy.

Government Interaction

Phedišang has been accepted by the provincial Department of Social Development as providing valuable care and nurturing for over 500 orphans and vulnerable children. This is the result of ongoing efforts and discussions at all levels, including many visits by project management from Johannesburg. Phedišang Limpopo made a formal application for support in February 2009. In June 2009, Phedišang discovered that Enable ADP had applied for similar support using the names and identity numbers of children at Phedišang Enable drop-in centre. This was clearly out of order, and Phedišang alerted the government officers to this situation. Phedišang then offered to withdraw all the Enable children from the collective Phedišang application.

As a result of Phedišang's clear and honest behaviour, and the work being achieved, government has started to support Phedišang centres. The first funds started to flow during October 2009, and government has supported food, transport, salaries and some administration at five of the seven centres. They have also made detailed reporting demands on Phedišang Limpopo, with which that office has complied. The government department has now insisted that each drop-in centre apply for its own certificate as a non-profit organisation, open a separate bank account, and manage the support of orphans separately, in order to qualify for funding. Phedišang has complied with this request although it does place extra administrative burdens on us. We have done this because we owe it to donors to do whatever we can to secure government funding for orphans and vulnerable children. We are determined however, to maintain our careful management and supervision of the Phedišang centres.

In terms of structure and constitution, Phedišang Central (distinguished from individual, separate Phedišang drop-in centres) continues to play a supervisory role, employs the staff and coordinates fundraising and donations for all the Phedišang centres. It also co-ordinates feedback to all donors and supporters, including Government.

Future Plans

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

Other future direct plans include the following:

- **Consolidating and cementing relations with the South African Government.** This will involve making sure that we conform with all government requirements. At the same time, we will not allow Phedišang standards to slip, and continue to provide warm, nurturing care for all Phedišang children.



- **Managing the long school break created by the FIFA World Cup.** This will mean making the Phedišang centres exciting venues for daily attendance by orphans and vulnerable children over a long period. We aim to install operating television sets at each centre, and supplement this with activities looking at the World Cup teams, performance logs and groups so that Phedišang children really feel part of this international event.
- **Improving the educational achievements of Phedišang children** - Initially this will be achieved by improving assistance with homework, and distributing donated dictionaries and calculators to senior children. We also need to monitor that homework is being done. In time, we hope to have a computer/resource centre and library at the office in Limpopo to give Phedišang children computer experience and access to the Internet. We will also facilitate applications to tertiary education institutions where indicated.
- **Improving the health care monitoring and access for Phedišang children.** This is one of the pillars of Phedišang and has routinely been relegated to second place by feeding, urgent demands, and government and legislative compliance. At present Phedišang conducts rudimentary monitoring and assistance, which can and will be improved. In time, hopefully, we will achieve the national goal of more awareness and testing for HIV/AIDS as well as a higher degree of general wellness.
- **Forming stable long-term relations with donors.** The success with Merison BV, Tiger Brands and Imperial Logistics shows that this can be done. We need to convince corporate donors that Phedišang is fundamentally building capacity in an otherwise barren sector of our South African society.

In conclusion, as I move out of the day-to-day operations, a personal note of thanks from me to all my friends who have helped so generously with Phedišang. I have agreed to join the Phedišang Board and maintain ongoing close supervision as the project evolves and grows. Our effusive and heartfelt thanks to all in the Phedišang circle -- 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 your support into the future!

Leigh McLean
Project Director
May 2010