

Newsletter No. 16 – September 2022

All Smiles in Eswatini



Back to school: supported students at Lwandle RC Primary School are happy to resume lessons after 2 years of closures due to COVID lockdowns and political unrest.

With lockdowns over, students were very happy to return to school. My visit in February was heartening, I was not sure what to expect after the disruption caused by political unrest and COVID. I was given a great welcome wherever I went as usual and best of all for me was seeing the students who were in tertiary, or finishing their studies ready for work. The obstacles these students have had to overcome to graduate are many and for me, would seem insurmountable. When we started the orphan support scheme 17 years ago, I did not envisage helping beyond primary school. The then local chairman Rowan Howe extended support into high school for those who managed to pass their exams and now, we are able to help a talented few through tertiary. Some 10 or so sponsored orphans are now at university or have finished and contributing their skills in teaching, nursing and paramedical care.

A huge thank you to all sponsors and supporters.

V.McDonaugh UK Chair

Celebrations at Engwenyameni Primary School where the SCT has provided home economics equipment.



London Fundraiser by New Trustee: Chloë Gilbert



The DJ plays at Exmouth Market. Guests showed incredible generosity. Chloë shared the stage with Hleliswa Shiba who read her poem dedicated to the SCT.



A fun-filled evening of music, organised by Chloë Gilbert at Exmouth Market in London, raised an amazing £25,000; the money came from ticket sales, drinks and incredibly generous donations from friends and colleagues. So far, their generosity has provided play materials for children visiting the Manzini One-Stop Abuse Reporting Centre with their families, helped a student with her transition to university, and bought a laptop for another student who is starting university. It has also provided construction materials for a Neighbourhood Care Point where the

children of poor families will get care, a basic preschool education, and a meal. Three children are being sponsored through their school life, a high school graduate with proven entrepreneurial skills will be trained in dressmaking, so that she can start a wedding business and an exceptionally bright orphaned student will be helped with her A levels; she plans to study medicine.

Chloë Gilbert



Chloë Gilbert was appointed to the board 1 July 2021. She grew up in Malkerns and went to school at Usuthu, she currently lives and works in London but Eswatini will always be 'home'. "I am so grateful to Eswatini for giving me the most magical childhood and going back to visit my parents there is always a joy. I joined the trustees to try to give a little bit back to a place that gave me so much."

Helping with tertiary education

With the high levels of unemployment prevalent in Eswatini, it's hard to get well-paid work after finishing high school. Over the years, the SCT has helped several exceptional students further their studies and we can boast of midwives, teachers and an engineer. Funds raised by Chloë will allow the trust to expand this assistance.



Lindokuhle Bhembe has completed her Diploma in Primary School Education and is now employed by Antioch Primary School. While studying, she supported herself washing clothes. Her long-term sponsor, Caroline Egremont, paid her tuition fees.



Busisiwe earned a government scholarship to study social sciences at university. Promise will be supported through her A levels so that she can study medicine. Fikile showed great entrepreneurial skill, supporting herself through school. She is studying catering and will soon start dressmaking before embarking on an integrated weddings business. Sinethemba has completed teacher training and was helped to find work experience by SCT Director, Angus and his wife Small McLeod.



2021: A Difficult Year

Eswatini has been devastated by COVID and the severe economic hardship caused by the recurrent lockdowns. When infections lowered enough for restrictions to be eased and schools opened in May 2021, they were soon closed again because of political unrest.



Sponsored student Siphesihle outside the Resource Centre for Deaf and partially-sighted children at St Joseph's School. Only the walls were left standing after the November storm.

While still reeling from the unrest, the country was hit by a devastating storm, with gale force winds and hail stones the size of golf balls. Windows were smashed in classrooms and cars, roofs were damaged or blown away and books, equipment and supplies ruined.

Distance Learning



During the lockdowns, lessons were delivered using TV, radio and the national newspapers. Better resourced urban schools used smart phones to further study from home. If the closures had continued longer, the SCT planned to purchase smartphones for supported students to enable them to study online. Mobile coverage is good even in most rural areas but data costs are high.

Thandiswa from Emcozini High School studying at home

Offering Support Where it's Most Needed

Local Charities



Several local charities receive regular support. Unrestricted funds are hard to come by, but vital, if staff and services are to be maintained between funded projects. Hope House (left) provides respite and recuperation for long-term sufferers of primarily cancer and HIV and their carers. Cheshire Homes is a physical rehabilitation center, mainly helping people with disabilities. Swatini Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) is a non-governmental organization that has

been working for over 30 years to end gender-based violence. The Phumelela Project empowers vulnerable and marginalized people through knowledge, compassion and opportunity. Challenge Ministries supports people dealing with abuse and addiction.

Special Needs



Support for people living with disabilities is difficult in dispersed rural communities, where many people are disadvantaged. SCT supports institutions that provide help, especially for children. These include St Joseph's Mission, Mbasheni Primary, the High School for the Deaf and Siteki Primary School for the Deaf. The Smitherman Foundation pays for Njabuliso Dladlu, a Deaf assistant at Siteki Primary School. He is a great role model, helping with school maintenance,

mentoring, and counselling, and also teaches practical skills.

Community Schools



New schools are generally built by the communities they serve. The SCT support includes building classrooms and teacher housing, developing school gardens, supplying furniture for classroom, shelves for libraries, cookers and sewing machines for home economics. Fencing at Ekukhulumeni Primary School provided security for the children and staff and, by keeping livestock out, allowed them to develop vegetable gardens.

Vulnerable Children



Neighbourhood Care Points are built by communities to care for and feed hungry children. At Etiyeni, All Out Africa guarantees long-term support while the SCT purchases building materials. To alleviate the impact of the COVID lockdowns on already impoverished rural communities, the SCT has donated ePap, an easily prepared fortified food, for the terminally-ill, the disabled and child-headed households.

School Projects

Nsingizini High School Classrooms



School Principal Constance Dludlu with UK Chair Vicky McDonaugh and Eswatini Manager Phindile Ndabandaba with the new classrooms and the desks.



The new SCT supported classrooms at Nsingizini allowed the distancing necessary for lessons to continue during the COVID epidemic. The SCT has helped this new community-built high school, starting with Form 1 in 2016 then helping expand its capacity by adding new classrooms as the students progressed. The SCT has also helped with teacher accommodation, classroom furniture and a photocopier which allowed exam papers to be produced at school, rather than being collected from Nhlangano, 80km away.

Lavundlamanta High School



Situated in the dry low veldt, Lavundlamanti High School is one of the few schools nationally that teaches vocational skills. The school has 376 students.

The 15 sewing machines and 2 overlockers bought by the SCT for the Consumer Science class arrived just in time for their end of year exams.

Teachers, SCT Manager Phindile Ndabandaba, board member Angus McLeod and British High Commissioner Simon Boyden with the new machines.

St. Holy Ghost Teacher Houses



Head teacher Mrs Magagula with the teachers who live in the new staff housing built with help of SCT. Mrs Magagula and SCT Chair Vicky McDonaugh with three of the supported children.

Without decent housing, remote rural schools cannot attract and retain good teachers. Situated in the dry lowveldt, Holy Ghost is far from town and serves a poor community. Over the last 8 years, the SCT has helped Head teacher Mrs Magagula transform the school. The trust has built a library, a classroom for agriculture lessons, and teachers' housing. Almost 40 children have been supported there. Most are now at High School.

Eswatini Eradication of Poverty Organisation



Eswatini Manager Phindile Ndabandaba introduces UK Secretary Rob Mackenzie to the group committee and local leaders

With 30 members, this newly established group has 2.5 hectares of good irrigable land granted to them by the local authorities. Water comes from a perennial stream. Mostly recent school leavers, they have the support of teachers and local extension officers.

Though the roads to Ekukhanyeni are poor, Manzini is only 10km away and there is good demand for high value crops like fresh vegetables, herbs, and chillies.

The SCT has helped purchase fencing materials, fertiliser and tools.

Supporting Partially-sighted Students



Mbasheni is an inclusive school in North Hhohho. Here, partially-sighted teacher Nondumiso Shongwe teaches Sebabonke Braille literacy ready to start school in Grade 1.

Angela Everson wanted her estate to benefit other people with disabilities and particularly people in Africa where her sister-in-law has strong links. She died in 2021 and a bequest to the SCT has allowed two further Perkins Braille machines to be bought for the only primary schools in the country that cater for blind and partially-sighted children: St Joseph's and Mbasheni.



Thanks to this bequest and following advice and contacts from Sightsavers UK, the SCT will also help a partially-sighted high school student on the support scheme with a laptop with text-to-speech software and to develop a system of maintenance and repair for the schools' Braille machines.

Blind high school student Khuzulwandle at St Joseph's with SCT board member Robert Thwala and Manager Phindile Ndabandaba.

Help us increase support; visit our website at

www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/ to make a donation.

A Day in the Life of Linda Malaza



Linda with his step-mother by their Luve home.

Linda is now in Form 3 at Lamawandla High School. He is 16-years-old and lives with his step-mother in the central Eswatini, near Luve.

With a broad smile, he outlines a typical day: "I always wake up at 05:30, make my bed and get ready for school. Since we don't have running water, I have to walk about 500 metres to get water from the river below our homestead. I then make a fire and prepare hot water for my morning wash.

While it's heating up, I gather

up the school books, polish my shoes and iron my uniform. After washing, I head for school, leaving at 6.30am for the 4km walk. There is a bus but it's too expensive. On the way to school, I'm joined by friends and we arrive in plenty of time for the 7.45am assembly."

Lessons run from at 8am to 4.20pm with a 30 minute break at 11 and an hour off for lunch at 1pm.

After the walk home and a quick rest, he does his household chores: usually collecting water and firewood ready for the evening meal. Term-time, there's not much chance to play and with schools being closed due to the COVID lockdown not only has studying been difficult but he hasn't been able to play football, his favourite game, with friends. "My life has really changed now that I'm in high school. I now have to work twice as hard as I did in primary school. I have to wake up much earlier than I did before and walk a long distance to reach school. After finishing Form 5, I hope to study to become a heavy plant engineer. All the subjects I've chosen in high school will facilitate my dreams of studying towards this profession."

Linda Moses Malaza is a double orphan. He joined the scheme when in Grade 4 at Ekutsimleni Primary School. His stepmother is the local health motivator. She is unpaid but commonly receives food hampers from the community for her work. His two elder siblings now live and work in town. Linda is supported by Patricia Lappin & Norma Gould.



Linda on the dusty road to school.

Nozwelo Magagula: My Life with the SCT



The Swaziland Charitable Trust strives to support struggling students and transform their lives.

In 2014 when she was in Grade 4 at Antioch Primary School, Nozwelo was introduced to the Trust by her school teachers who knew the challenges she was faced with, but also knew and understood her potential. When interviewed, she was 20-years-old and finishing her final Form 5 exams at

Dvokolwako High School. She is a single orphan living in her maternal home. "Learning has been fun ever since I began receiving assistance from SCT. It's been stress-free! We haven't had to worry about getting school uniforms, text books or stationery. I'm able to focus on my studies because my fees are always paid on time and I'm assured that whenever I encounter a problem at school, I can call the SCT office and inform them about my needs.

"Before getting help, my life was not the best. Other children made fun of me because I didn't always have a full uniform and the long walk home was cold in winter without a school jersey. I'd sometimes stay at home just to avoid being laughed at. My life was just not the best during that period and my exam results suffered.

"Since joining the scheme, my results have been the best! I can literally see my future brightening. Words are not enough but I'd like to share my appreciation for all the help I've received up until now. I wish SCT the best in all they do and pray that they are able to support more children like they did with me so that they can experience the joy and relief I've enjoyed over the years."

In closing, Nozwelo mentioned sponsorship had broadened her mind; "I initially wanted to be a nurse, but now I want to be a pharmacist and a social worker, so I can assist other children just like SCT has done for me."

Like so many students in poorly-resourced, predominantly rural schools, Nozwelo's studies suffered during the lockdowns caused by COVID and political unrest. Her Form 5 results were disappointing and she will need to upgrade her results if she is to follow her dreams.



Nozwelo at home with the SCT Assistant Manager Slindele Nkosi.

Nicholas Baring CBE Retires



It is impossible to imagine the SCT without Nicholas. He served on the London board for over 50 years and was instrumental in setting up the Charitable Trust in the first place. It was his wise overseeing of the investment portfolio which has made so much of our programme possible. A frequent visitor to Eswatini, he took a close interest in all aspects of the Trust's work and has many friends there who like us, miss his wise counsel.

FAWESWA Scholarship Programme



To honour Nicholas Baring, the Eswatini Board chose to support the local chapter of the Forum for Africa Women Educationalists. They support girls' general wellbeing throughout their education and promote increased involvement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Six talented student will be supported by the SCT (including one boy in recognition that boys seem to be falling behind in their academic achievement).

Supported student, Siphesihle Shongwe; St Francis Headteacher, Mrs Dlamini; FAWESWA Programme Officer, Stella Nkosi; SCT Assistant Manager, Slindele Nkosi.

Dr Ben Nsibandze



Politician, regional administrator, church elder, and Indvuna of the Lwandle chieftaincy, Ben Mshamndane Nsibandze was one of the most respected figures in Eswatini. He was deputy prime minister and for a short while, prime minister. For many years, he headed the national crisis management agency. He lent his knowledge, wisdom, and his gentle art of persuasion to further the charity's aims for over 40 years and the SCT was very lucky to have him on its board. He is much missed by family, friends, and colleagues on the trust. Dr Nsibandze passed away on 13 January 2021, aged 89.

Zondle Methodist Boys Home



Harvesting beans at Zondle Methodist Boys Home.

In recognition of Dr Nsibandze's long years of service, the SCT plans to provide long-term support for a project that was close to his Lwandle home and close to his heart. Ben was a church elder and founder of the Zondle Boys Home. The home cares for destitute boys, giving them a safe and loving place to live and teaching them self-reliance on the home's farm. The SCT will pay for the education of six boys at the home.

Trust News

New UK Trustee: Toby Baring



Toby Baring first visited Eswatini in 1995, prior to his attending medical school in the UK. During his six-month stay, he worked in various medical set-ups including the government hospital in Manzini and a rural based clinic, where he was exposed to many aspects of medicine in a developing nation.

Toby completed his medical degree and went on to specialise in orthopaedic surgery and now

works in London. Although he has not had a chance to return to Eswatini since then he has kept in touch with changes and developments in the country. He is very pleased to be able to join and contribute to the Trust.

Eswatini Board Member: Cebile Manzini Henwood



Cebile joined the Eswatini board in 2016 bringing exceptional skills in leadership, governance, and management. A committed Christian, she is a strong believer in women and children's rights, the dignity of life and family and a promoter of human thriving and flourishing. Cebile honed her skills during her 10-year tenure as Executive Director of the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA). Her tenure there was characterised

by the introduction of innovative ideas and continuous support from local and international funders.

How to donate

Help us develop a healthy and well-educated community in Eswatini by making a donation. All donations go towards supporting children in schools, improved school buildings and community support and projects. Please send a cheque or pay online by visiting the SCT website: <http://www.swazilandcharitabletrust.org/how-to-help/>

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