

The Beatrice Project

**‘Restoring dignity and opportunity
to
young women in Zimbabwe’**

**Trustees’ Annual Report
for the period 1 November 2018- 31 October 2019**



Registered charity number: 1175299

Principal address: 23, Rockleigh Road, Southampton, SO16 7AQ

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1 Introduction

1.1 General Overview of the Year

It has been another exciting year for The Beatrice Project (TBP), with significant progress in some key areas. The unstable political and economic situation has brought even greater challenges to our partners in Zimbabwe, Ntombi Nto, (NN), including daily power cuts of 18 hours, a shortage of fuel and soaring school fees. Prices in shops can change daily, and many basic commodities are impossible to buy. Despite all this, Ntombi Nto, under the inspiring leadership of Joy Khumalo, continues to deliver the project with enthusiasm and dedication. The initially cautious response from the young women and their local leaders to recent developments in sanitary protection has become increasingly one of acceptance.

During the year, NN began to work more with other agencies in Zimbabwe, growing both in confidence and in the scope of their work. NN were successful in being recognised by the local Gwanda District Council (GDC) This has been a huge step forward, which now allows NN to work in an official capacity with health centres, the social work dept. and schools. One consequence of this has been requests from other schools in the District for help to set up similar projects in their own schools. Another benefit is that data collection needed for reporting and evidence of project success, for instance on school attendance, is now officially permitted. A meeting with community leaders and other stakeholders, funded by TBP, was held following the ratification of NN by the GDC, and significant progress made. There was a sense of ownership expressed and commitment from cultural leaders to support the aims of the project.

Our ambition to enable underprivileged girls from these rural communities to maximise their potential for finding work and contributing to their communities, remains as strong as ever.

1.2 Background

The **Beatrice Project** (TBP) is a small UK based charity supporting the work of Ntombi Nto (NN), a Zimbabwean registered trust. Ntombi Nto means 'a wholesome young woman'. TBP began life when it was formally launched by Mrs Joy Khumalo in Zimbabwe in 2015 in partnership with Susan Hutchinson in the UK. This was in response to the concerns of local community and church leaders in the rural areas south of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, about girls dropping out of school because of a lack of affordable sanitary protection.

The purpose of the report is to provide information on the background to TBP, its current state and its plans for the future.

1.3 Objectives and activities

The objectives of TBP are:

To advance in life, and relieve the needs of, girls and young women by providing help, advice and resources as a means of:

- a) developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals;
- b) enabling them to continue in their education;
- c) providing education on reproductive health and psychosocial issues;
- d) supporting locally led child protection measures.

A specific group defined by age and gender (menstruating girls) and geographical area (the Gwanda region, some 100km outside Bulawayo) was selected by local elders, school and church leaders and was based on past school attendance and positive attitude towards education. The girl beneficiaries in the pilot group typically walk 5-10 kilometres to attend the distributions of sanitary pads and the workshops where they are also given some food and drink.

1.4 Structure, Governance and Management

Names of Trustees: Susan Beatrice Hutchinson
Dr. Karen Rosemary Trewinnard
Adrian John Thomas

Governing document Constitution 23.10.18

2 Looking Back Over the Last Year

2.1 TBP visit to NN

For a variety of reasons, TBP were not able to visit the project in Zimbabwe this last year. A trip is, however, planned for the early Summer of 2020. Regular communication, by phone and email, has supported the smooth running of the work.

2.2 Training

Since the team was unable to visit in 2019, no further training has been delivered by TBP this year. Work has, however, continued, under Mrs. Joy Khumalo's guidance and with the support and backing not only of TARSC (The Training and Resource Support Centre) but of Nobuhle Shumba (trainer from The Butterfly Company supplying menstrual cups in Zimbabwe) and Bonani Medina (local youth leader) as well as some of the cultural leaders in the communities. An alternative weekend of training, arranged by NN, ran in August.

2.3 Sanitary Pads



Figure 1: Young schoolgirls awaiting their pads

During the year, TBP has continued to fund the distribution of sanitary pads at the three initial sites plus an additional school site. Against all odds, the pads continue to be available for sale in Harare, the capital, at a reduced price made available to NN. However, free transportation of the pads from Harare is no longer available to us, so NN/TBP are currently looking at alternatives. From Bulawayo they are taken to the sites by Mrs Joy Khumalo (NN).

2.4 Menstrual Cups

The menstrual cup (imported and sold by The Butterfly Company in Harare) was introduced to the girls and their leaders and adult carers in August 2018. This year, we have seen growing numbers of parents and guardians willing to attend information meetings and giving consent for their daughters to choose to use this means of sanitary protection. During the period of this report, more than 100 girls have begun using the cups. Further training of the project beneficiaries and the supply of more cups is being planned. This is still a relatively new concept to the rural communities and its introduction has needed careful and sensitive handling. With the potential to change radically the girls' experience of menstruation, and solve the three challenges of affordability, hygiene and disposal, the cup is seen by TBP as a very realistic alternative to the current means of sanitary protection.



Figure 2: Delighted teenagers with their new menstrual cups and cotton bags made and donated by local friends and supporters in UK

2.5 Reusable and Disposable Pads

TBP is continuing to provide disposable sanitary protection for around 200 girls in the target group. Others are using locally made washable pads and some girls are making their own with sewing machines and start up materials provided by TBP.



Figure 3: Some relaxation between workshops

3 Looking Forward

Plans for the coming year include the continuing of regular Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) workshops conducted in the local areas by health professionals and other qualified or semi-qualified adults. These will begin to include boys as well as girls, using the tried and tested Auntie Stella materials (SRH course materials produced in Zimbabwe by The Training and Resource Support Centre) The materials are in English and Ndebele, the local language, and delivered in collaboration with a TARSC approved Ndebele speaking youth worker and local cultural leaders. In terms of sanitary provision for the girls, we will continue to provide sanitary towels and we expect the numbers of girls making re-usable pads to grow. Additional sewing rooms are planned, in conjunction with textile teaching in schools, whilst, it is hoped, increasing numbers of girls will be successful in their use of the cup. Education and training for this will continue to be delivered by local professionals from an established in-country supplier and disseminated by the adult teams on the ground. We are currently seeking funding to add, year on year, to the numbers using cups which will improve the sustainability of the project. The Project continues to explore all available methods of sanitary protection and seek sustainable solutions to issues of affordability, hygiene and disposal. We expect to continue our support of NN as they respond to requests from schools to set up similar projects.

4 Financial review

4.1 Income and Fund Raising

We are indebted to St. James' Place Wealth Management for their grant of £1000 which will go towards the costs of the next residential training 'camp'.

All other funds have so far been donated by friends and families of the Trustees or raised through specific fundraising events. Following a meeting of the board, it has been agreed that all trip expenses will be funded by the Trustees themselves. A small ring-fenced fund is to be set up to allow donors to support the project in this specific way, by contributing to the air fares and subsistence costs incurred by individual Trustees.

As a charity, we are very fortunate to be supported by a number of regular donors, on whose committed giving we rely for a known amount each month. Regular newsletters, particularly following a trip or at notable times of the year (eg Christmas) give information on the activities, needs and plans of the Trustees and the charity, and these often prompt generous giving. We have been very grateful for some large one-off donations from individuals who have, for example, received an inheritance which they wish to share with us, or on a smaller scale, a family who chose to donate to TBP instead of giving Christmas presents.

Other fundraising activities have included:

- December 2018: a Line Dancing group held a Christmas raffle and raised £60
- December 2018: a Christmas fund raiser and Annual Review was held and raised just over £1000
- March 2019: a 'Come and Sing' (classical) was held and raised £1100. This was led by Jackie Fox LRAM ARAM and the accompanist was Cherith Kingsley-Smith, both of whom gave their services free of charge
- September 2019: a second 'Come and Sing', this time with an African flavour, was led by Penny Hastings, with a drumming workshop led by Tom Gregory, and raised £800

With this money we have given grants to NN for the provision and distribution of sanitary protection to 300 girls, as well as the delivery of the monthly workshops. We have also facilitated the setting up of a bank account for NN in Botswana with a loan \$500.

4.2 Risk Mitigation Reserves

As principal funders of the work undertaken by NN in Zimbabwe, TBP recognises the need to be able to provide the quarterly support grants on a regular and timely basis.

Whilst the trustees wish to see all funds raised by TBP to be transferred to Zimbabwe within as short a time scale as possible, they recognise the need to hold some funds as a reserve to ensure continuity of support.

With quarterly support grants currently around £2,500, the trustees consider that a reserve of £1,000 is appropriate at the present time and will seek to increase this to £2,500 (3 months support) in future periods.

4.3 Receipts and Payments Accounts for the initial period Nov 18 to Oct 19

Rising costs in Zimbabwe, coupled with the introducing of the menstrual cups accounts for the rise in the annual expenditure.

Receipts and Payments Accounts				
For the period from 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019				
Receipts and Payments				
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Last year
Receipts				
Donations	6,418	-	6,418	8,991
Gift aid	921	-	921	567
Grants received	-	1,000	1,000	-
Funds raised prior to incorporation	-	-	-	1,757
Fund raising	2,515	-	2,515	1,260
Sub total	9,854	1,000	10,854	12,575
Asset/Investment sales				
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	9,854	1,000	10,854	12,575
Payments				
Grants made	6,793	-	6,793	3,835
Conference & training	-	-	-	3,645
Sanitary protection supplies	3,071	-	3,071	1,452
Cost of fundraising	176	-	176	-
Administration	55	-	55	-
Bank charges	175	-	175	51
Sub total	10,270	-	10,270	8,984
Asset/Investment purchases				
Loan to Ntombi Nto	402	-	402	-
Sub total	402	-	402	-
Total payments	10,672	-	10,270	8,984
Net receipts/payments	-818	1,000	584	3,592
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Cash funds last year end	3,592	-	3,592	-
Cash funds this year end	2,774	1,000	3,774	3,592

Figure 4: Income and Expenditure

4.4 Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period			
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Cash funds			
Bank accounts	2,774	1,000	3,774
Total cash funds	2,774	1,000	3,774
Other assets			
Loan to Ntombi Nto	402	-	402
Total other assets	402	-	402
Liabilities			
	-	-	-
Total liabilities	-	-	-
Signed by two trustees:			
	S.B.Hutchinson		
	A.J. Thomas		
Date of approval:	01.04.2020		

Figure 5: TBP Assets and Liabilities

5 Testimonials

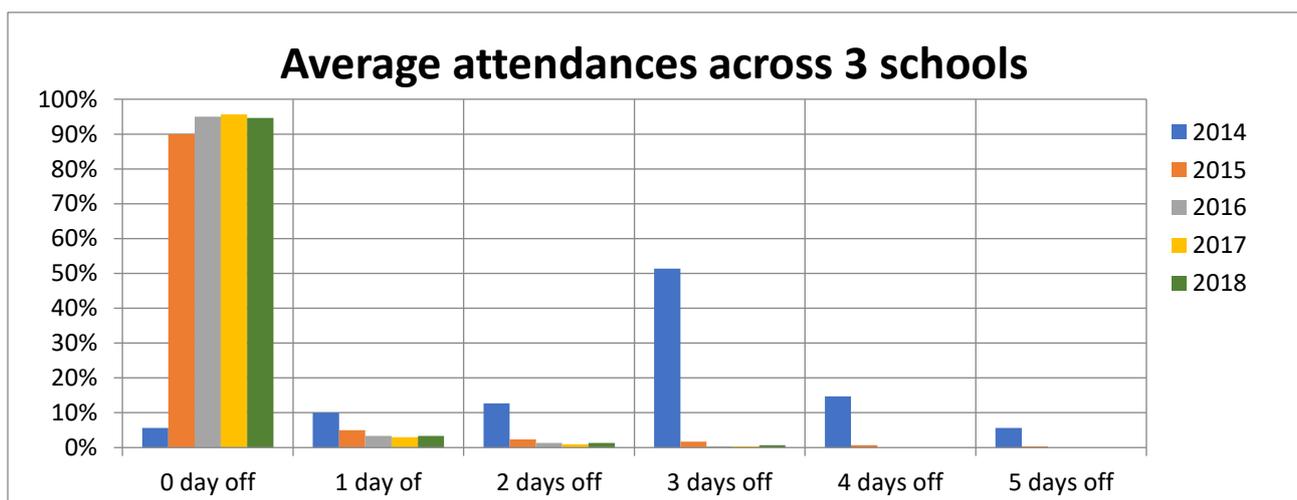


Figure 6: The Impact of NN / TBP

This exciting graph indicates the provisional records of attendances across the schools. The attendance figures for girls have improved very dramatically.

One of the younger beneficiaries said, 'I am a new person (to the project). There is respect (from TBP/NN) and I have learned a lot. I will teach others too as a PE (Peer Educator). I will change my community.'

A school teacher said, 'Before TBP many girls did not attend school when they had periods. Often these girls would get pregnant early because of ignorance. Now all attend with pads [or cups] and [this is] much appreciated by both parents and girls, who are also benefitting from the Auntie Stella program.'

Girls at Sibula Secondary School who had started using the menstrual cups said they 'work well. However, when emptying the cup, it can be messy and the main challenge is the unavailability of water if one has to change at school. The first two days are a major challenge as the flow will be heavy'. They were 'anxious that they were going to stain themselves [but] the two days passed without an accident. It was a great relief.'

Simbumbumbu schoolgirls said they were 'comfortable' with the cups, that they experienced 'no challenges and used the cups throughout their periods.'

An adult volunteer on the project said, 'Most of the girls no longer feel ashamed and afraid when having periods as they trust the sanitary products that have been availed by [TBP/NN]. The girls feel well supported by their peers and through SRH training.'



Figure 7: Weekend conference delegates with their gift bags

Declaration:

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report.

Signed: S.B Hutchinson

Signed: K.R.Trewinnard

Signed: A.J.Thomas.....