

# The Sophia FOUNDATION

*Raising consciousness for the good of the whole*



Issue 9 | Dec 2021 | End of Year Letter

## How can we see the crises of our time as a call to contribute to the positive evolution of the whole – the human being, the earth, the realms of nature and the macrocosm?

### *Dear Friends of The Sophia Foundation*

One of the core principles of The Sophia Foundation is our focus on inner development and self-knowledge. It is our belief that it is only by knowing the self that we can contribute to the transformation needed for human beings to assume conscious responsibility for the crises of our time and to move in a direction that is good for the whole.

As you will read, building people and care of animals and the environment has underpinned our commitment to most of our partner organisations this year. There has been acknowledgement that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) presented by the United Nations are not achieving the intended results of greater sustainability and well-being. What is reassuring is that it has been recognised that "we need to shift our attention to what is going on inside of us" to meet the complexity of our current challenges ref. Inner Development Goals (IDG's) Initiative.

The year 2021 has been a full and rewarding year for those involved in The Sophia Foundation as we have built on existing relationships, developed some new ones and given a few one-off crisis donations in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Table Mountain fire. Whilst we are in the privileged position of being able to offer financial support, we do where possible like to add additional value and input. We appreciate those organisations that have welcomed this collaboration and feel that we have all been enriched in the process.

A short summary follows of The Sophia Foundation partnerships this year.

“ *...by knowing the self  
that we can contribute  
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Website: [www.thesophiafoundation.org.za](http://www.thesophiafoundation.org.za)

Trustees: Lorraine Forbes (Founder) · Koos Rossouw · Johan van Zyl · Jessica Chaplin ·  
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## THE HOPE EXCHANGE

*“ We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty ”* Mother Teresa



### Peter Solomon, Director, writes:

The Hope Exchange is a beacon of hope for homeless people. We currently serve more than 2,200 individuals in the centre of Cape Town, which represents approximately one third of the estimated number of homeless people living in the Cape Town Metropole. We do not judge and our mission is to provide our clients with dignity and hope by offering holistic care such that they can be reintegrated into society and reunited with their families. Our services include daily ablutions, a clinic, nutritional meals through our feeding partners, personal development groups and a 40-bed second phase shelter.

During our discussions with the trustees of The Sophia Foundation, we shared our vision of setting up a professional drop-in centre for our clients. After being approached by the Western Cape Department of Social Development (DSD), we have extended that ambition to expand our current shelter of 40-second phase shelter beds to include a 300-bed first phase shelter on a site nearby. This will mean an approximate 15% increase in the bed capacity currently available in the city. We believe this project will have a significant impact on reducing the number of people living on the city's streets.

This is an exciting opportunity, which will have an impact on the homeless as well as the residents of the City of Cape Town. We want to thank the trustees of The Sophia Foundation for providing a major portion of the seed funding required to get this project off the ground. We aim to have Phase 1 of the new facility operational by March 2022.

- “With everyone on the streets and the high cost of living, at least here we can wash ourselves before anything else” (Kwezi)
- “Dignity is the most important thing in life. If you don't have dignity, you have nothing” (Olivia)
- “I feel safe and cared for when I come to the clinic at The Hope Exchange. People don't judge me and I get the medicine I need” (Tarryn)
- Not everyone on the street are good people. At the Hope Exchange we are like family, we know each other. (Charlene)



**WATERSHED**

ANIMAL RESCUE & REHABILITATION FUND

**WATERSHED**

*“We must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. True humanity does not allow us to impose such sufferings on them. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace.”* Albert Schweitzer

### Stephane Jackson, Founder, writes:

Watershed is a small organisation with a committed group of volunteers who form an integral part of our team and help with our outreach work and sterilisations in the more neglected areas in and around the Western Cape. We strive to give the animals we work with the best possible care in order for them to live a comfortable, pain free life with new hope for their futures and without unnecessary breeding and cruelty. Education forms an important part of our outreach and we do this with respect for the living conditions of folk and their surroundings. Animals are only removed and rehomed when absolutely necessary. We raise funds in order to be able to sterilise, feed, deworm, treat for ticks and fleas and vaccinate. Much of our work involves supporting existing organisations that do not have the funds to meet the animal welfare needs in their communities. Since its inception in 2010 Watershed has sterilised more than 3000 animals in Napier, Bredasdorp, Franschoek and Simondium, Laingville on the West Coast and Bottelery Road in Stellenbosch.

Sadly, animal breeding and overpopulation do not go away and it is a continual struggle to find funding to be able to continue to offer outreach to areas where it is most needed. I would like to thank The Sophia Foundation for their generous support throughout the past two years. Our vision is to be able to return to particularly neglected communities on a more regular basis. We are very excited that The Sophia Foundation has committed to funding focused outreaches to these areas next year so that we will be able to plan ahead and begin the process of monitoring the impact of on-going sterilisations and community education on the welfare of the animals in these areas.



This neglected dog was happily rehomed.



SPCA

*“In a perfect world, animals would be treated with the respect and compassion they deserve. They would never experience pain, fear or hunger”* Moyo Ndukwana

### Moyo Ndukwana, CEO CoGH

#### SPCA, writes:

Our Wildlife Department provided a safe sanctuary for 1502 wild animals including; porcupines, seals, sea birds, reptiles and several wild small mammal species during our last financial year. It is an honour to work with these animals and there is no better feeling in the world than watching a rehabilitated wild animal return to their natural habitat.

The CoGH SPCA Inspectorate and Wildlife unit staff were directly involved with the search and rescue operations of the 2021 Table Mountain fire that ravaged the National Park and its surrounds bringing great tragedy to animals and humans alike. We deployed inspectors to the site of the fire to comb the fire-ravaged areas for injured animals and stationed a team at the Disaster Operations Centre in Goodwood.

The generous donation from The Sophia Foundation and others enabled us to build a stock of essential medical supplies like burn shields, dressings and bandages that we were able to use and share with other shelters in the affected areas. As ferocious as the fires were, they showed us how South Africans pull together in times of crisis and that there are compassionate and caring people who want to contribute to making it a better world for animals.



## STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

### BURSARIES AND INNER LEADERSHIP COURSE



*“Man is effective in the world not only through what he does,  
but above all through what he is”* Rudolf Steiner

#### **Pieter Swart, Director: Principal and Transformational Gifts, writes**

At the heart of Stellenbosch University's coat of arms lies the very apt Latin phrase, *Pectora roborant cultus recti*, which means, “A sound education strengthens the spirit”. This was taken beyond the classroom in 2021, when The Sophia Foundation partnered with Stellenbosch University and awarded 20 bursaries to students from the “missing middle”. While students are on campus, they continue to weave the tapestry of their lives and prepare for an uncertain future. A condition of receiving the bursary was that students take the opportunity to broaden their horizons, grow and develop their consciousness to face the future, and explore and grow as individuals by attending an Inner Leadership Course. This took the form of four workshop sessions and continuous support throughout the year and not only assisted the students to better understand their inner selves, but also to understand others, break down perceived barriers and overcome fears. Many were fearful and hesitant at the outset, but in the end it was clear through their verbal and written feedback, that the interactions had not only given them the opportunity to get to know and understand themselves better, but also to grow as human beings and meaningfully contribute to the future.

“*Being a part of these workshops has taught me to look at the highs and lows of life a lot differently. As cliché as it sounds, there are no bad experiences in life. Only blessings and lessons. Because of seeing life in that way, I have been able to find gratitude in all circumstances. The reflective cycle is one of many tools that has helped me look at things from perspectives other than just my own, which is highly valuable.*”

Karabo

## .... STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

### BURSARIES AND INNER LEADERSHIP COURSE

As the SU contact person I was greatly touched by the involvement and caring of the workshop facilitator, Keriesa Botha, but even more so by the support, attentiveness and living example of what The Sophia Foundation stands for as demonstrated by Lorraine Forbes. At the lunch that concluded the activities it was clear to me that a number of young students were better equipped for their futures and after reading their voluntary feedback I was assured that the interactions definitely added meaning to their lives, their communities and the world we live in.



“ By delving deeply into the concepts and skills we learnt at every session, with practical tools and tricks to apply to daily life, I began a process of transformation that I was unaware was even happening, until I sat back to account for my time at the course, and marvelled at how far I have come. Kiara. ”



## CAPE TOWN UNIVERSITY

### COVID-19 CRISIS FUNDING FOR OUTSTANDING FEES

*Education is the passport to the future for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.* Malcolm X

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of many people in a number of different ways. Loss of income has meant that some middle-income families, who do not qualify for NSFAS bursaries, have not been able to pay university fees. The Sophia Foundation responded by offering bursaries to 20 “missing middle” students at Stellenbosch University and paying the outstanding fees of a family of three studying at Cape Town University, to enable them to get their end of the year results and continue with their respective studies and careers.



*“The payment of our outstanding Cape Town University fees by The Sophia Foundation was overwhelming for me and my family. It has relieved much of the stress my parents have been under, and helped us find hope. The thought of not being able to continue with my degree was heart breaking, but a painfully real possibility. This act of kindness has allowed me to continue into the second year of Architecture. Our recent meeting specifically helped me acknowledge the necessity of reciprocation. I will in turn, conduct myself in any way that enables me to give back after this seemingly miraculous turn of events.”* Rachel

*“This sponsorship by The Sophia Foundation has meant that my siblings and I are each able to unlock a different stage in our futures, an option that previously seemed completely unattainable. The prospect of registering for the Honours programme at UCT in the coming weeks is keeping me on the edge of my seat. I cannot even begin to describe how excited I am to embark on my journey into this new phase of university life”* Jane

*“With the payment of my outstanding fees, I am now able to count myself among the Alumni from UCT, an achievement I used to dream about. My future career opened up for me with the release of my results. I was able to work legally in Architecture, was appointed to a position in an Architectural firm, and am furthering my steps to become the fully-fledged Architect/designer I first set out to be. As I am now earning a steady income it is possible for me to contribute to the household expenses of my family whose ability to earn has been impacted severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. One day I hope to help someone as much as I have been helped”* Simon

earth  
child  
PROJECT

EARTHCHILD

2021 ALUMNI PROGRAMME

*“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence”* Rabindranath Tagore



**Janna Kretzmar, Founder and Director, writes**

The past two years have been challenging for the youth who are part of our Alumni Programme. It has been a difficult time to be a high school student and in addition to have to deal with the heightened challenges of living in communities where there is increasing unemployment and gang violence.

Despite this, our Alumni youth have shown up and inspired us with their resilience, their commitment, and their wish to make a difference in their communities. Quote: As one of our programme leaders shared, “We can learn so much from the young people, from the way they are showing up with kindness, presence and vulnerability. They have everything within them and we are just here to activate it.”

Our quarterly workshops focused on team building, communication, building resilience and how a ‘challenge shared is a challenge halved’. Participants were also exposed to new and interesting venues, such as Kirstenbosch Gardens, the Norval Art Gallery and the Community House, site of activism. Quote: One participant shared, “What was surprising was that when we were sharing our problems, most of us were sharing exactly the same problems. We come from

different backgrounds and to be able to share that today with one another and learn from one another was great.”

The Alumni Programme is maturing and our focus this year has been on developing our curriculum and clarifying the learning journey going forward. We enter the New Year with a clear vision and plan and remain deeply grateful to The Sophia Foundation for walking this journey alongside us and for supporting our Alumni Programme for the past seven years.



## MAGINGQI COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT



*What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.* Nelson Mandela

### **Johan Joubert, Wildlife Veterinarian and Conservationist, writes:**

“How can I make things better?” This was the leading question in The Sophia Foundations end of the year letter of 2019 and was again raised in the opening comments of the end of the year letter of 2020.

An opportunity to make a difference arose in 2021 with a proposition to assist the Magingqi community on the Wild Coast. This community lives on the land between the Mpande and Sazinge rivers in the former Transkei. The economy is not well developed and relies on subsistence cultivation, some basic coastal harvesting and governmental grants.

Lorraine Forbes, Koos Rossouw (trustee of The Sophia Foundation) and I were invited by Tim De Wet, who is driving a business project for the Magingqi community, to visit this community in August 2021. As a result of this visit, I committed to an initial six month trial to assist with social upliftment, animal welfare and conservation work in the community on behalf of The Sophia Foundation.

Various fact-finding visits followed. Poverty and poor living conditions for inhabitants as well as their animals were identified as concerns and opportunities where we could assist. After various meetings with Chief Diko and his advisors, we decided to start by setting up meetings with the different villages within the community, with the emphasis on animal welfare.

Our initial aims and objectives are to create animal welfare awareness, with a focus on visually sick and underfed animals, as well as guidance on basic environmental matters such as littering, the control of alien and invading plant species and protection of indigenous vegetation. We have taken dog food, dewormed dogs, clipped overgrown toenails, administered rabies control, treated dogs for parasites and have discussed sterilization. The community has taken a new interest in their dogs and we have been surprised to see that there is already less litter even though we have not yet come up with a formal plan.

## ... MAGINGQI COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECT

In the long term, our intention is to implement a basic veterinary care and husbandry program for all animal species including dogs, cattle, goats and pigs. Besides animal care, we will address issues such as environmental management and restoration of natural habitat. Although the local population is harvesting various marine and intertidal species, it seems that coastal biodiversity is still intact. The threat of marine harvesting and unsustainable utilisation by groups from outside the community is real and needs to be managed.

The Sophia Foundation's intended future involvement will be based on education to guide and empower this community to improve their own and their animal's living conditions and to protect a section of this wonderful coastline. It is hoped that this project will serve as an example and showcase for the rest of the Wild Coast.



Dog food for the community



Johan Joubert, Chief Diko and CHief's advisor Cameroon



## PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION

THE SOPHIA FOUNDATION RANGERS  
SUPPORT PROGRAMME

*Only when the last of the animal's horns, tusks, skin and bones  
have been sold will humankind realise that money can never  
buy back our wildlife* Paul Oxtan



The United Nations estimates the value of the illegal Wildlife Trade globally between \$7 billion and \$ 23 billion. Field rangers are on the frontline of the battle to fight increasingly organised and well-equipped criminal syndicates. Their salaries fall under the mandate of national government and unfortunately do not reflect the associated risks involved. Peace Parks currently employs a highly successful incentive scheme across seven of the protected areas where their foundation has an operational footprint. Incentives are paid to staff recovering contraband and illegal wildlife products, and apprehending poachers.

We are very happy to be in the process of preparing another partnership agreement with Peace Parks – this time to supplement their Awards and Incentive Programme for field rangers in nine of their protected areas. Next year will be somewhat exploratory as the training of rangers will include an aspect of personal growth and incentives and awards will be given for anti-poaching successes as well as for qualities of character such as leadership, loyalty, integrity and trust.



# The Sophia FOUNDATION

*Raising consciousness for the good of the whole*

It is with much gratitude that I honour my parents through whose generous legacy I was able to found The Sophia Foundation. I would also like to thank my trustees Johan van Zyl, Jessica Chaplin for their background encouragement and especially Koos Rossouw for walking beside me and offering unconditional guidance, support and friendship.

My work with The Sophia Foundation has added immeasurably to the meaning of my life, and I have felt deeply enriched by the relationships with our partners. Stephne Jackson, founder of Watershed, is a wonderful example of humility, courage and compassion in her absolute commitment to alleviate the suffering of domestic animals. Pieter Swart, director: principal and transformational gifts at Stellenbosch University, was prepared to stretch boundaries and go beyond the call of duty to ensure the successful and smooth implementation of the Inner Development Course - attendance being a condition for students to receive a bursary from The Sophia Foundation. Over the many years of our involvement with Earthchild Project, I have witnessed the growth in maturity and confidence and the broadening of horizons of the Alumni. Much credit goes to Janna Kretzmar, founder and director of Earthchild, for the positive influence they have had on the lives of so many children and teachers from disadvantaged schools. We are very fortunate that Dr Johan Joubert, voted as one of our top 10 conservationist by the Endangered Wildlife Trust, is leading our outreach into community development on the Wild Coast. With his deep knowledge, experience and sense of humanity, he is already making an impact. And then, I would like to acknowledge Werner Myburgh, CEO of Peace Parks Foundation, for the great work he is doing for conservation in Africa and his passionate striving to secure a future where humankind lives in harmony with nature.

May you be filled with faith, hope and love as you reflect on the people and organisations mentioned in this letter. They represent just a few of the many responding to the call to contribute to the positive evolution of the whole - the human being, the earth, the realms of nature and the macrocosm.

With my warmest wishes

Lorraine

Lorraine Forbes



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