

The Sophia FOUNDATION

Raising consciousness for the good of the whole



Issue 11 | Dec 2023 | End of Year Letter

In a time of international turmoil what is my responsibility?

Dear Friends of The Sophia Foundation

In seeking an answer to this question, I have drawn on the works of Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist.

We all have parts of ourselves that we do not like, or we think society won't like and we push these into our unconscious psyches. Jung referred to this collection of repressed, ignored or rejected aspects of the personality as the SHADOW. The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about him/herself. The more these aspects of ourselves remain unconscious and are repressed, hidden or denied, the more likely they will emerge in other ways such as societal conflicts, prejudices and destructive behaviours. One of these ways is by seeing our shadow traits - desirable or undesirable - in others or by PROJECTION.

"Projections change the world into a replica of one's own face", said Jung. In other words, everything that irritates us about another is a reflection of what we have denied within ourselves. "When an individual does not become conscious of their inner contradictions" and do the long and courageous work of incorporating these into the rest of the personality, "the world acts out the conflict and is torn in opposite halves". The personal shadow is a bridge to the collective shadow which houses societies' basest impulses of greed, violence, and hatred.

And so, just as individuals have shadows, so do societies and nations. Each side needs an "enemy" to contain all the aspects that they cannot stand or do not want to know about themselves. War is a collection of millions of personalities, incapable of facing their own shadows and hanging the evils of the world on to others.

What is our responsibility? The most important work we can do is therefore the deep and painful work of removing the masks we have been wearing and facing and integrating our own darkness. "Such a man knows that whatever is wrong in the world is in himself and if he only learns to deal with his own shadow, he has done something real for the world. He has succeeded in shouldering at least an infinitesimal part of the gigantic, unsolved social problems of our day", Jung.

“ The courage with which
we bear our darkness
frees others from having
to carry it for us. ”

Jung



Olga Guarch – Mystery

Website: www.thesophiafoundation.org.za

Trustees: Lorraine Forbes (Founder) · Koos Rossouw · Johan van Zyl · Jessica Chaplin ·
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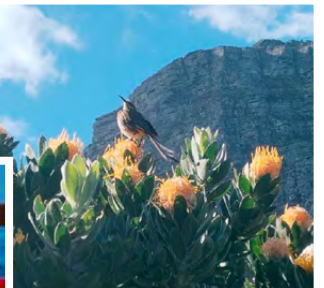
Raising consciousness for the good of the whole



OUR FOUR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2023

- STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
Bursaries and Inner Leadership
- SUGARBIRD TRUST
Invasive Alien Plant Removal on Table Mountain
- WATERSHED
Animal Rescue, Rehabilitation and Outreach
- PEACE PARKS
The Sophia Foundation Rangers Support Programme



In this time of international turmoil, I believe the creative wisdom of Sophia is needed more than ever – that it is only by taking individual responsibility and moving to a new level of consciousness that we will outgrow the world's problems. My main work this year has been on succession planning to ensure that the ethos, vision, and values of The Sophia Foundation remain the crucible that will ensure it meets its commitment to honour and be guided by this wisdom into the future.

The development of the individual human being continues to be the primary focus of all the endeavours of The Sophia Foundation. Our Inner Leadership work with our bursary students at Stellenbosch University has had another impactful year with a diverse, excellent, and responsive cohort. We are in discussion to offer Inner Leadership more broadly within the University next year.

The South African Wildlife College (SAWC) does the ranger training for Peace Parks Foundation (PPF). We had a successful workshop with them earlier in the year to introduce Inner Leadership to some of their staff as part of our partnership with PPF and The Sophia Foundation Ranger Support Programme. We

have been asked to return for a 4-day workshop for more of the SAWC staff members in December.

Our partnership with Watershed Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Fund continues and we have great admiration and respect for Stephne Jackson and her outreach and commitment to ameliorate the suffering of animals in some of our most deprived areas.

The Sugarbird Trust teams are doing impressive work clearing alien vegetation from Table Mountain and I am sure that those of you who know and love our mountain will recognize the difference they are making.

A summary follows of The Sophia Foundation partnerships this year.

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

BURSARIES AND INNER LEADERSHIP COURSE

“The greatest breakthroughs of the 21st Century won’t occur because of technology; they will occur because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human.”

John Naisbitt, Business Futurist



Herman Snyman, Bursary Recipient and Inner Leadership Course Participant, writes:

This excerpt comes with the utmost of gratitude since I have been a participant and student of this endeavour of The Sophia Foundation for the last 2 years.

I am from a sheep farm in the rural Brandvlei district, Northern Cape. Being sheep farmers, we are dependent on nature, but since 2018, the district suffered an abnormally dry period for four years. We received no funding from the government and had to feed the animals to keep them alive. This had a huge financial impact on us and meant that the livestock had to be reduced.

Although we had difficult times on the farm, my parents supported me in my goals. As a result of my dedication and hard work, I was accepted for BCom Actuarial Sciences.

I do not want to be defined by these difficult times. I focus on the fact that I have no control over most things, and I work very hard to change the things I

can. I have also learned to be especially thankful for a family where we can support each other - because no matter what: we have enough, we are healthy, and we have each other.

The opportunity of The Sophia Foundation bursary program at Stellenbosch University came as a saving grace in my second year of my studies (2022). At first, the financial benefit of this was evident. This bursary can lighten the financial burden for my parents, but also give me some independence.

On 7 April 2022 my application got accepted for The Sophia Foundation bursary on condition I committed to an Inner Leadership Course. I soon realized that this admission will, over the span of the Inner Development Goals Leadership Programme (IDG) workshops, completely surpass the financial benefits I received. After my life-changing first year of interacting with Ilze Olckers, facilitator of the IDG project,

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BURSARIES AND INNER LEADERSHIP COURSE



and Lorraine, I had the honour to be part of this programme again in 2023.

I arrived at the first session after a crazy Mathematical Statistics test the previous day. I was confused, overwhelmed, and had no sense of purpose if it did not mean performing in tests. My jaw hit the floor when Lorraine shared her story. She laid out her amazing academic career in an analogous field. She also detailed the mental struggles of a life driven by academic performance, materialistic success, and no sense of inner change. These illusions have a way of deceiving us. We try so hard to live up to those expectations and false personas that we end up straining ourselves.

I was once so unaware of how this constant materialistic success ate me from inside, slowly killing the fun and brilliant soul I have. Lorraine's own story and teatime pep-talk shockingly made me realize how a life focused on achieving can be so pointless if you, as a person, get lost in the process. It made sense to me why she was so adamant about creating something to drive self-discovery.

Eagerly, Ilze exposed us to this world of strengthening the spirit. The IDG project identified 23 Inner Leadership skills and qualities which they organised under five main themes, namely: Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting. Ilze covered 18 out of the 23 Inner Leadership skills with us, along with Lorraine and her inputs, readings, and

other material supported by experiential learning and group processes.

It was with this realization that I, along with the brilliant, young, and vulnerable friends of mine from the journey, fully embraced what Ilze started teaching us - so enthusiastically and with a wisdom we probably have not encountered much of until now.

With the opportunity to be part of this venture for two years I was exposed to two cohorts of students attending Stellenbosch University. It was evident that we, as young people in today's society, are in a position at this tertiary institution to study various things but learn nothing.

The Sophia Foundation & the IDG project's vision and what we as young people truly seek, started aligning. It created a space, where in each session, all of us could gather seeds of enlightenment.

In a world and country where some seek to create division it was truly heart-warming to see us unite in the very things that so often get used to create hostility - race, gender, culture, religion, language as well as disciplines. It is with these factors that we were able to sow these ubuntu seeds we gathered from this project so effortlessly into the spaces we operate in.

I echo what Ilze wrote in last year's newsletter as it seamlessly applied to the 2023 cohort: "I was both energised and humbled by the beautiful soulful presence and sincere participation and commitment of

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BURSARIES AND INNER LEADERSHIP COURSE

such a diverse group of students to their own inner learning journeys. But what was even more important, and inspiring was their commitment to be a circle of support to one another and to witness each other's journeys throughout the year”.

The seeds started growing and growing. The IDG project enabled us to correlate words or ideas to situations and feelings that we have always been feeling but never experienced... and thus could not handle. This limited our learning of everything that happened or is happening to us. Being able to regulate oneself, emotions, and external situations should be a cornerstone of one's day-to-day life.

Presence and really feeling what you are feeling enables you to relate what you are feeling back to past experiences and will help you act more consciously upon the surge of emotions at any given point. This will ultimately lead to greater self-acceptance and self-management.

On the last day of the program this year some of my colleagues had the opportunity to share their reflections and learnings and did presentations to the rest of the group. A few of their profound insights include:

“I truly didn't know who I was when I started the course. Through introspection on the course, I became more self-aware and learnt more about who I am as a person. I learnt valuable life lessons that I can apply to my life to become a better friend, daughter and sister.”

“I recognised that life is a marathon and not a sprint. Having those gratitude moments has made my life much simpler.”

This showcases that The Sophia Foundation was the catalyst and proof of the Latin saying: “Tandem fit surculus arbor”. The twig did become a tree.

I want to thank Ilze for her amazing ability to facilitate such a diverse group of students and for encouraging and guiding us through this journey of body, mind, and soul.

I want to thank Lorraine for not only being the benefactor to all our lives, but also for the immeasurable impact of her presence, advice, and help.

So, just like some of the dry trees from my farm that grow come rain, heat, drought, or wind... bloom, make room for nests, let the dead leaves and branches fall off... I will never ever forget where my roots lie.

In the meantime, all that I achieve will have a cool shade cast over it by the majestic tree of The Sophia Foundation... protecting me from the harsh onslaught of the world I once knew.

The Sophia Foundation should look back at all its endeavours and the spaces that it entered in this broken world and realize the forest of trees it has created.

Thank you, The Sophia Foundation!

“ As I was reviewing all the work we covered on the course I got overwhelmed with gratefulness for the opportunity we had to gather here on a Saturday and learn things about ourselves and the world from a new perspective. ”



SUGARBIRD TRUST – CLEARING ALIEN VEGETATION

“In nature’s economy the currency is not money, it is life.”

Vandana Shiva, Environmental Activist

Koos Rossouw, Trustee of The Sophia Foundation, writes:

This year, The Sophia Foundation has supported the Sugarbird Project to clear the invasive alien vegetation from Deer Park, Devil’s Peak and Rhodes Memorial – all precious areas of the magnificent Table Mountain National Park.

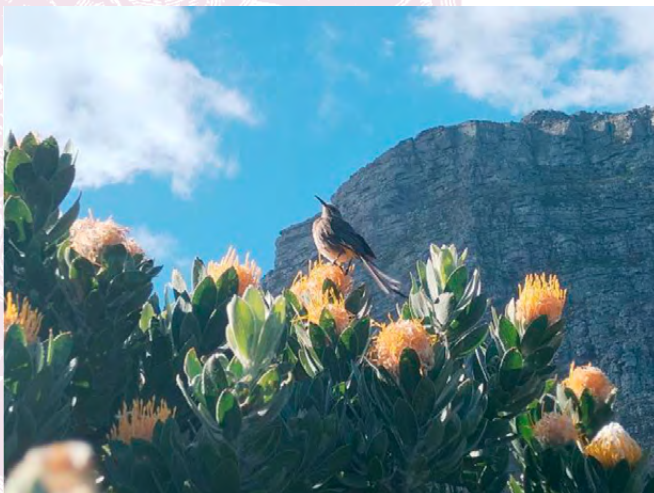
After the runaway wildfire of April 2021 that started at Kloof Nek and burned all the way round the front table to destroy parts of the University of Cape Town, millions of invasive alien seeds sprouted on the front and eastern slopes of Table Mountain, threatening to stifle the slower-growing fynbos and render the area a wasteland devoid of diversity.

Thanks to a remarkable team effort by donors, volunteers and the Sugarbird teams, the transformation of these slopes from highly infested to pristine has been remarkable, though the full effects of the clearing will only be seen in two or three years to come, when the fynbos has fully recovered.

The Sugarbird Project is so named because when the Sugarbirds return to the proteas, we know the fynbos is back in fine form. So it was with delight that we received these pictures recently, from Glen Mabekha, the leader of Sugarbird Devil’s Peak team, of a female Sugarbird perched on a pincushion protea.

Even before the fires, the mountain slopes around Rhodes Memorial near UCT were a depressing wasteland monoculture of black wattle devoid of birdlife. Now a walk to the historic blockhouse is a sheer delight, with literally hundreds of thousands of baby silver trees shining in the sunlight, mingling with countless other beautiful, colourful fynbos plants.

As Willem le Roux, founder of the Newlands Forest Conservation Group, and now an integral member of the Sugarbird management group noted: “Our work post-fire may go down as the single biggest



Sugarbird on pincushion proteas at the foot of Devil’s Peak



Baby silver trees thriving where Port Jackson removed



SUGARBIRD TRUST – CLEARING ALIEN VEGETATION

intervention in a decade to significantly increase the number of silver trees in TMNP. It's invaluable."

Willem nails it. We are protecting something priceless here. Not just for ourselves and our children and all the future generations still to come, but for all the species of the precious fynbos ecosystem.

And of course, this wonderful project has a much-needed and much-appreciated spin-off, which is that it gives purpose, dignity and an income to so many

people who may otherwise despair for the future. It's a win-win all round!

Next year, the Sugarbird Project hopes to clear the entire area between Rhodes Memorial and Deer Park, bringing the whole front slope of Table Mountain and Devil's Peak under control, and massively reducing the chances of reinfestation. We'll keep going, knowing our efforts will be well rewarded by an abundance of pink watsonias and purple pelargoniums, yellow pin-cushions and noisy Sugarbirds in the years to come.



Biodiversity at its best in Deer Park – previously all Port Jackson



Devil's Peak and Deer Park teams, reporting from their office



WATERSHED

ANIMAL RESCUE & REHABILITATION FUND

WATERSHED

“Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of Nature and its beauty”

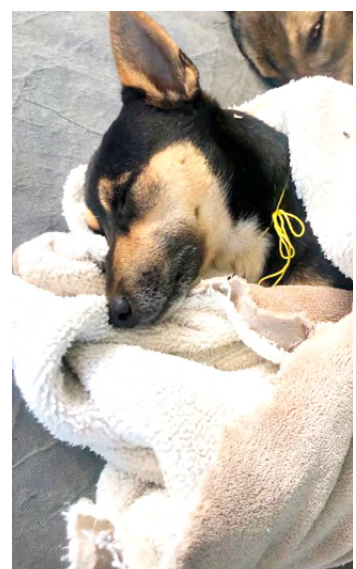
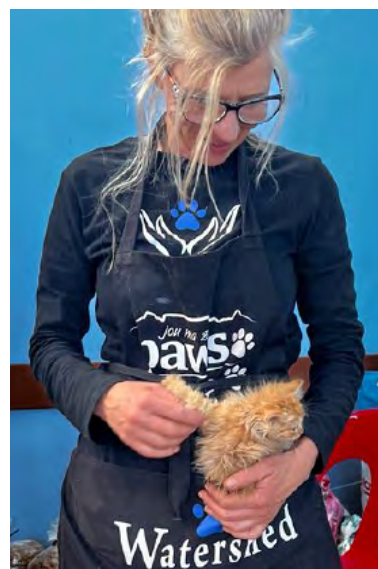
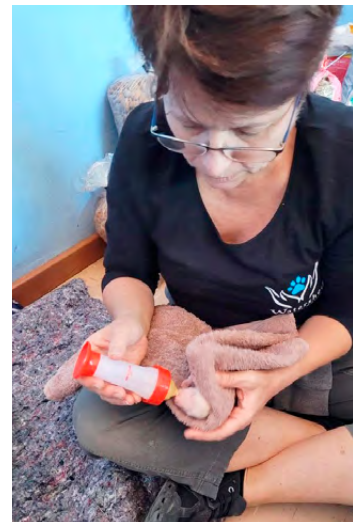
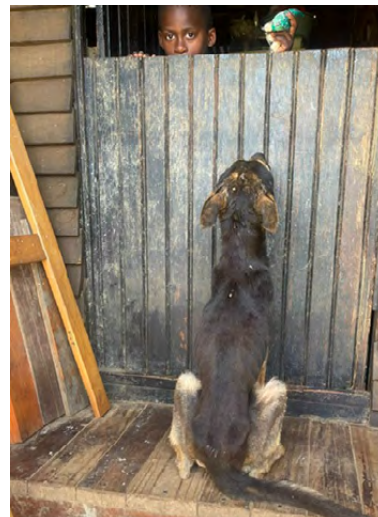
Albert Einstein

Stephne Jackson, Founder of Watershed, writes:

The quote above truly encapsulates the way in which Watershed embraces our work. Once we decide to help a community we feel is in dire need and where there is great animal suffering, we seek to look at the community as a whole in order to bring about a change in mindset that will hopefully make a positive difference to the lives of the animals and their surroundings. When I walk into a home where the animal is chained, has no shelter, is emaciated, has no access to direct fresh water or food, my focus is not just on these immediate and obvious problems. I will take a good look at the surroundings, the way in which the family lives, the area in which the animal has been confined, the children's conditions and how the parents speak to them and treat the animal and in addition the relationship between the husband and wife. All these aspects need to be worked on to enable positive change and a respect, trust and hopefully permanent understanding of how to treat a living being.

Our approach is to teach and not to preach. I believe education is key, not only when one approaches the home environment, but also in schools where education should encourage learners to look not only at how to better themselves in life, but also at what they can do to make a change to the environment in which they live.

With overpopulation, growing poverty and materialistic obsessions, true values and a respect for all living creatures have become very rare. Sadly animals, both farm and domesticated, are commonly not regarded as subjects that feel pain, have emotions and need stimulation, veterinary care and basic food. Our Animal Protection Act (APA) and Municipal by-laws are way out of date. Law enforcement is difficult to secure in certain cases as the rights of animals are overlooked and thus abuse and cruelty are growing exponentially without due punishment for horrendous deeds



Outreach visits and sterilisation drives in communities where we can educate and make an impact on the overbreeding of domesticated animals.

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WATERSHED

ANIMAL RESCUE & REHABILITATION FUND

WATERSHED

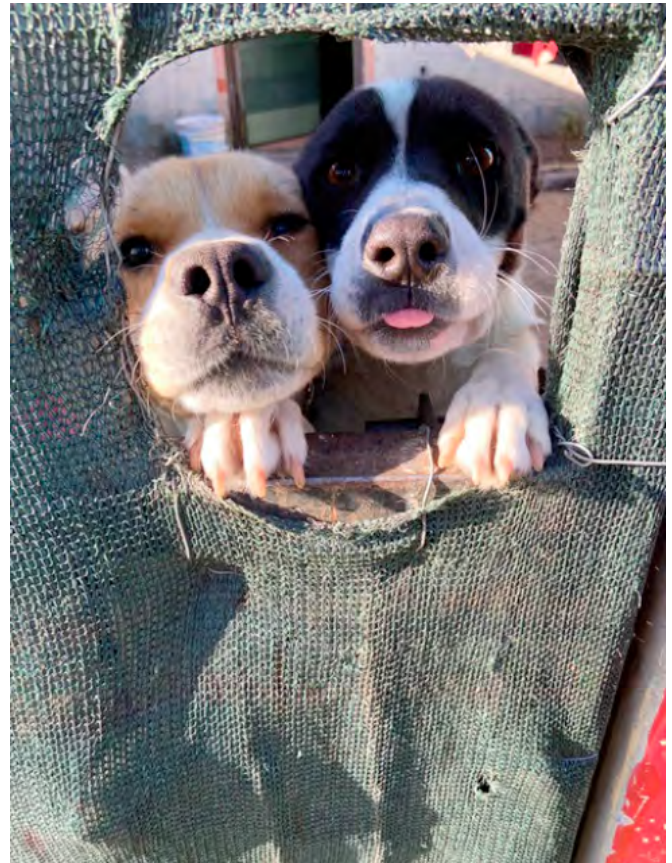
Helping those without a voice, one animal at the time...

committed. A profound and beneficial change would be to amend the laws relating to the rights of animals in this country to include severe punishment for crimes committed as well as law enforced sterilisations for all domesticated animals at 6 months, in all communities.

Watershed continued to focus on its core work in 2023 which is to assist, support and concentrate on Sterilisation Outreaches in communities where we can make an impact on the overbreeding of domesticated animals. In conjunction with education and positive reinforcement, we hope to start turning the tide on the abuse, cruelty and neglect of animals both farm and domesticated. Our areas of concentration this year have been Caledon and Tesselaarsdal; the neglected communities in West coast from Vredenburg to St Helena Bay (including Louisville, Laingville, The Cove); Napier and Bredasdorp farming communities; and the farming areas on Bottelery Road Stellenbosch. We have sterilized approximately 400 animals this year and our annual return sterilisation outreaches with Envirovet to certain communities, are beginning to show a positive impact. Areas that have shown extreme improvement within the last two years are Napier and Tesselaarsdal. We hope to achieve the same with the Caledon community within the next two years.

We have also been able to include new areas of help and have worked closely with small animal rescue organisations in areas such as Wallacedene, Scottsdene, Bloekombos, Tsomsombeni, Langrug in the Western Cape. These do not have sufficient funding but work hard to bring about change in their animal communities. We support them with monthly feeding programmes for animals as well as assistance with veterinary care for injured or sick animals. Our rehoming work has continued with Bidair Cargo flying rescue animals from shelters to new approved homes all over South Africa.

Our outreach work has only been possible through the generous support of The Sophia Foundation. Together we are working towards “widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.”



“ Once we decide to help a community we feel is in dire need and where there is great animal suffering, we seek to look at the community as a whole in order to bring about a change in mindset that will hopefully make a positive difference to the lives of the animals and their surroundings ”



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THE SOPHIA FOUNDATION RANGERS
SUPPORT PROGRAMME

“It would be absolutely useless for any of us to work to save wildlife without working to educate the next generation of conservationists.”

Jane Goodall, Conservationist



Ken Maggs, Counter Poaching Unit Manager, writes:

Field Rangers and Community Scouts (Rangers) can often be the most underappreciated of Africa’s conservation heroes. Without their passion and dedication to protecting wildlife our work towards human-wildlife coexistence on the African continent is doomed.

Rangers are the thin green line between wildlife and poachers. Their days are filled with counter-poaching activities that include, not only law enforcement operations in the fight against wildlife crime, but more significantly Rangers are the ones working with communities living adjacent to protected spaces on preventative measures such as responding to human wildlife conflict (HWC) incidents and collaborating on HWC mitigation tools. Rangers don’t just need to be able to defend themselves and the wildlife they are guarding, they need to understand the wildlife, the bush, how the ecosystem functions, community dynamics and so much more. They operate in complex and highly dangerous conditions for low levels of compensation.

Recognising the importance of supporting these conservation heroes, The Sophia Foundation generously committed to support Rangers in protected areas where Peace Parks Foundation has an operational presence. The Sophia Foundation Ranger Support Programme has three components: a Success-based Incentive Scheme for Rangers, the Best Performing Ranger Awards, and an Inner Development Training Programme.

Last year the Ranger Support Programme supported Rangers deployed in protected areas across Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to conduct over 11,000 patrols. More than 6,700 wire snares were removed from the bush during this time, an encouraging indication of biodiversity conservation at work.

2023 has been a time of reflection on the progress and challenges of the first year of the project. This evaluation has resulted in adjustments to the activities that make up the Ranger Support Programme.



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RANGERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME



The Success-based Ranger Incentive Scheme continues to be embedded in the four participating Parks in Mozambique. The long-awaited Co-Management Agreement (CMA) between Peace Parks and Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) was signed in June 2023. This 20-year commitment to collaborate will ensure capacity and consistency for counter-poaching measures in the participating protected areas in Malawi. A similar process towards establishing a CMA between Peace Parks and Zambia's DNPW was finally able to gain momentum again during 2022. The signing of this CMA is due to take place in the third quarter of 2023, allowing for the rollout of the Ranger Incentive Scheme in both participating protected areas in Zambia.

In December, Best Performing Ranger Award ceremonies are taking place in participating protected areas to acknowledge outstanding Field Ranger performance amongst peers and colleagues.

The Inner Development Training Programme component of The Sophia Foundation Ranger Support Programme was a concept born out of the recognition of the toll taken on the mental wellbeing of Rangers. Progress continues in the development of this innovative training programme in close collaboration with The Sophia Foundation and the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC). See insert below by external programme facilitator on behalf of The Sophia Foundation, Ilze Olckers.

“ *The Inner Development Training Programme component of The Sophia Foundation Ranger Support Programme was a concept born out of the recognition of the toll taken on the mental wellbeing of Rangers.* ”



PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION

THE SOPHIA FOUNDATION

RANGERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Peace Parks is deeply appreciative of The Sophia Foundation's support of the Ranger Support Programme. The biggest conservation impact as a result of this funding is the empowerment of Rangers, as it is only through equipping, capacitating and motivating them, that they are able to counter the threats to wildlife in protected areas.

Ilze Olckers reflects on Inner Leadership at SAWC:

Both The Sophia Foundation and Peace Parks Foundation have their original impulse in the intertwined and entangled understanding of the evolution of human consciousness toward cooperation and care across and beyond boundaries; with an understanding that we have to think and act for the good of the whole; and with a recognition of the sanctity of all life and the interdependence and interrelationships between us humans and our 'kin' in the animal and plant families.

That none of this is possible without the inner development of our capacities for self-reflection,

collaboration, co-creation, complexity awareness, conflict management, empathy and compassion or connectedness, to name but a few, must be self-evident. And yet, in our busyness and in pursuing the tasks and demands of the everyday, we lose sight of this single most important fact.

We are not alone in this regard. It took some years for the United Nations and other global role players to recognise this fact when recognising that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals across the world had been singularly unsuccessful. The result, as written about in the previous Sophia Foundation newsletter, was the research and development of the Inner Development Goals Framework in 2021. And it is this Framework, together with select other approaches which have guided the engagement of The Sophia Foundation with the South African Wildlife College (SAWC), a Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) inspired institution and a SADC (South African Development Community) recognized centre of specialization in conservation education, training and skills development based just outside of the Kruger National Park.





PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION

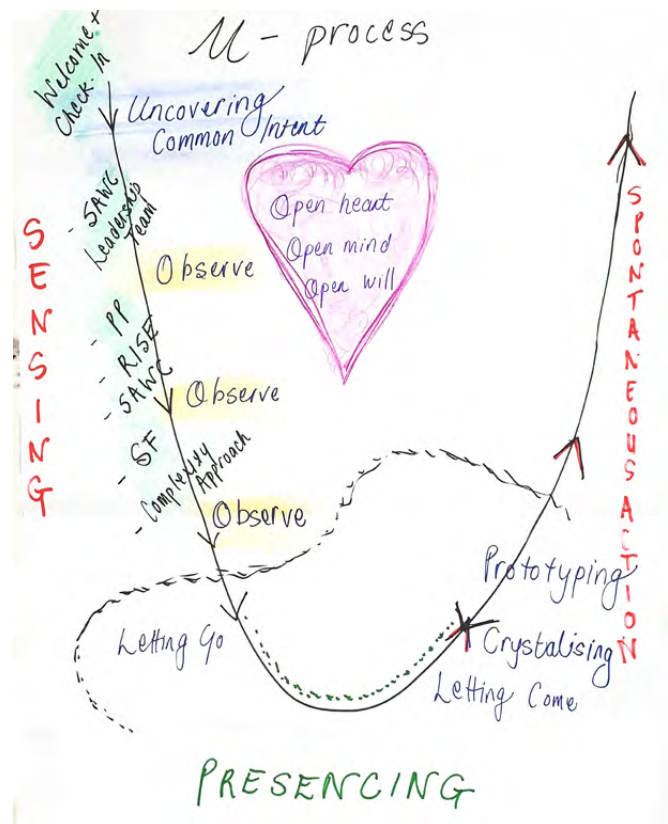
THE SOPHIA FOUNDATION

RANGERS SUPPORT PROGRAMME



It took the visionary leadership of Lorraine and The Sophia Foundation, in partnership with PPF, to recognise that a focus on Inner Leadership and the skills and competencies contained in the Inner Development Goals Framework, alongside creating greater awareness and shifts in our level of consciousness, could potentially support and amplify the impact of the critical work of the SAWC.

To open up and begin this conversation about the relevance of an Inner Leadership approach in all the work of the SAWC, and also in particular in the work of training Field Rangers, a 2-day workshop was convened in April 2023 on the beautifully designed campus of the College. Twelve representatives from both the College and the PPF embarked on a learning journey together making use of Otto Sharmar's U-process and dipping into the Inner Development Goal Framework to reflect on this question. We had some difficult conversations and were forced to face some hard truths. We spoke about the 'Landscape of



Otto Sharmar's U-process

Fear' as chronicled in a recent article on the Kruger National Park, and what it would take to transform that to a Landscape of Hope. Finally, all present agreed that a follow-on learning journey was needed with an extended group to delve deeper into the relevance of Inner Leadership Development for the work of the SAWC and the PPF.

It is with great joy and anticipation that we have scheduled a further 4 days of training on Inner Leadership for Conservation Change-makers for a larger group in early December 2023 to do precisely that.

The Sophia FOUNDATION

Raising consciousness for the good of the whole

My special appreciation goes to the trustees and all the friends of The Sophia Foundation who are committed to our vision for your encouragement in bringing this vision alive. Koos Rossouw my co-trustee has travelled with me from the start, initially overseeing all the administrative, legal and financial matters but later in addition taking a particular interest in our projects and being there as a backstop, support, advisor and friend to me. I also want to acknowledge the relationships I have developed with our project partners both past and present and how much I have felt enriched by the contact.

I started this letter with the question “In this time of International turmoil what is my responsibility?” Nelson Mandela is quoted as saying

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

Can we help to heal the world by recognizing that what we hate in others is what we hate about ourselves? Can we stop scapegoating others and withdraw our projections, acknowledging we are all co-responsible? Perhaps we can then learn to own and love the fallen parts of ourselves and others and contribute to a more conscious and kinder world.

With my warmest wishes

Lorraine

Lorraine Forbes



Exploratory Gathering for Succession Planning of The Sophia Foundation on 25 November 2023

Jessica, Cecilia, Stephne, Keriesa, Koos, Lorraine, Hayley, Lizma and Nick

Website: www.thesophiafoundation.org.za

Trustees: Lorraine Forbes (Founder) · Koos Rossouw · Johan van Zyl · Jessica Chaplin · PBO IT2321/2012