



Issue 7 | Dec 2019 | End of Year Letter

How can I make things better?

We live in challenging times of great uncertainty.

An introduction by Lorraine Forbes - I am regularly met with the question:

“In this changing flow of life events, how can I respond with dignity, courage and compassion and be present to what I am being called to do?... How can I make things better?”

Butterfly Art Project, held a Michaelmas Conference in September for people they had trained to work as art facilitators in the community.



Image: Butterfly Art Project

Each day started with the following words from Rudolf Steiner:

- We must eradicate from our soul all fear and terror of what comes towards human kind out of the future.
- We must acquire serenity in all feelings and sensations about the future.
- We must look forward with absolute equanimity to everything that may come.
- And we must think only that whatever comes is given to us by a world-directive full of wisdom.
- It is part of what we must learn in this age, namely, to live out of pure trust, without any security in existence.
- Trust in the ever present help of the spiritual world.
- Truly, nothing else will do if our courage is not to fail us.
- Let us seek the awakening from within ourselves every morning and every evening.



The intention of The Sophia Foundation is to contribute towards a kinder and more conscious world. We do this by building long-term relationships of trust with individuals from non-profit organisations with a similar vision, ethos and commitment to our core values. We believe that as sponsors we are responsible with the initiator for the outcomes of the projects we support, so choose to be engaged in an advisory, collaborative, supportive and observational role, as appropriate.

The Sophia Foundation is in its seventh year and has established a firm foundation from which to meet the challenges and rewards of its next cycle of development. I recognise the need to consider succession planning going forwards but this year have chosen to focus on four partner organisations (Astar Project, The Butterfly Art Project, Earthchild Project and Stellenbosch University JustLead!) with whom we have built strong relationships. I have asked each to give a brief résumé of their activities and achievements during 2019.

Our Four Partner Organisations

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2019

- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT and TRANSFORMATION through VISUAL ART-MAKING
- A DEEPER and STRONGER SELF AWARENESS
- FINDING our INNER VOICES
- INTEGRATING LEARNINGS to DEVELOP and REFINE a MEANINGFUL OFFERING

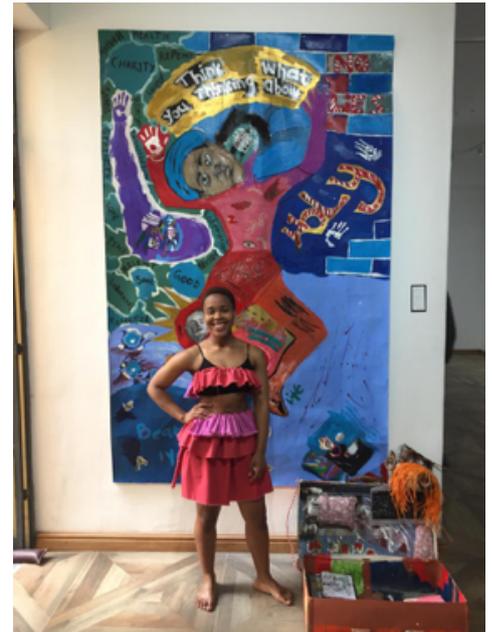


ASTAR Project and Indoni Dance, Arts & Leadership Academy Programme

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT and TRANSFORMATION through VISUAL ART-MAKING

Through support of The Sophia Foundation, The Astar Project (TAP) facilitated weekly process art sessions this year for twenty students from the Indoni Dance, Arts and Leadership Academy. The post-matriculant students are engaged in a 3-year training programme with the Academy which opens up opportunities for the students to pursue further studies and/or careers in dance and the arts.

The TAP art programme is an integral part of the Academy's curriculum and focuses on personal development and transformation through visual art-making. The programme is designed to deal specifically with identity, self-expression, healing and story-telling and included body mapping work, a suitcase project, and mask and costume making.



The students have described the programme in various terms, including “therapeutic”, “an emotional journey” and, “working with and healing painful memories”.

The programme culminated in an exhibition at the end of October which included a display of the students' artwork, two dance performances by the students and a short film by Jabu Nadia Newman that captures the uniqueness and authenticity of each student's mask and costume creation.



[Website link](#)



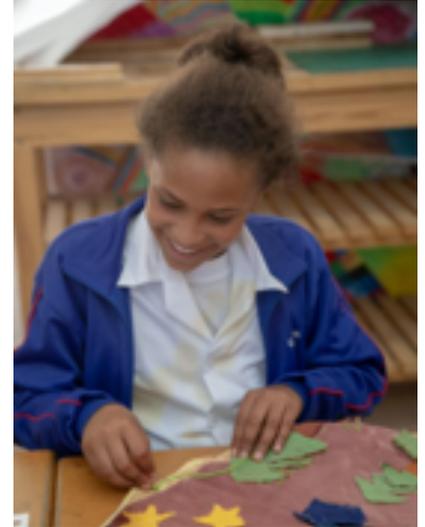
The Butterfly Art Project

A DEEPER and STRONGER SELF AWARENESS

BAP turned 9 years old on 10 October 2019. When a child turns 9 it faces a crisis caused by deeper and stronger self-awareness. This makes them see the world with different eyes, they start to question themselves and what their purpose in the world is, they ponder about existing rules and fairness, they question the knowledge of authority. These important questions for growing up can be painful questions.

Organisations have a growth biography themselves and go through some of the same developmental stages. At BAP we experienced that 9-year crises by critically thinking through who we are and what we can deliver with quality. Our number of beneficiaries is excellent.

“As a Community Art Facilitator trained by BAP I work with kids from a disadvantaged school. The teachers informed the principal that that the behaviour of the children I worked with had improved so dramatically that they wanted to make the classes available to more kids. The training has transformed the school and children. Thank you BAP.”



We consistently serve at least 360 children every week through structured healing art classes from our Art Centre in Vrygrond. A new response programme has evolved for children who are not able to go to school due to the lack of classrooms and teachers in the Western Cape.

In the past year we developed and tested a new training module for our Community Art Facilitators, “Traumatic-Stress Relief”, delivering tools and theory on how to assist at a psycho-social support level in disaster areas. Our journey of enhancing educators with art therapeutic skills was joined by 124 New Community Art Facilitators while 20 training modules were facilitated by us and our faculty.

We have many reasons to call 2019 a more than successful year. But it would not be a 9-year crises without questioning ourselves about our impact, about the quality of our work, about the most efficient ways to bring healing to children in need. So, we are ending this glorious 2019 with much gratitude and deep-felt appreciation for our supporters like Lorraine Forbes from The Sophia Foundation, who has been holding our hand through our challenging and reflective 2019, she was there to witness our crises, successes and achievements. Thank you Lorraine!

[Website link](#)



Earthchild Project

FINDING our INNER VOICES

This year we've been so amazed by the Alumni and their growth from the beginning of 2019. We started the year off with 27 young individuals very eager and enthusiastic about being part of the programme. We've had 3 workshops, beautifully facilitated by the Earthchild Project Facilitators, focussing on self-development, building positive relationships in the Alumni community and Earthchild Project as a whole, and fundamentally finding their inner voices. The Alumni have successfully facilitated their own workshops during our annual holiday programmes, and assisted with leading hikes with our eco-explorers.



“Being part of Earthchild and the Alumni has taught me so much. Thank you to everyone who support us. I am going to miss being a part of the Alumni because it's my final year, but I'm coming back to volunteer” - Emihlle from Khayelitsha

We have just come back from a successful eight-day camp where the transformation was phenomenal. A safe and supported community was maintained, deeper friendships were built, stories, tears and laughter were shared and we all united as a big family.

We are soon coming to a close for the year, and the progress of the programmes throughout the year would not have been possible without our biggest supporter, Lorraine from The Sophia Foundation. Her visits are always a pleasure and we appreciate her thoughtful conversations and how she always makes time to get to know the youth involved in the Alumni Programme.



[Website link](#)



Stellenbosch University JustLEAD!

INTEGRATING LEARNINGS to DEVELOP and REFINE a MEANINGFUL OFFERING

The JustLead! online short course, facilitated through Stellenbosch University's (SU) Centre for Student Leadership and Structures (CSLS), concluded its second year. A pilot project and work in progress, it focused on developing the leadership competency and capacity of young leaders across South Africa. Founded on three core pillars self-development, contextual awareness and responsiveness it aimed at fostering social justice awareness, cultural competency, and an understanding of local contexts. The programme which is presented both online and through a face to face, three-day leadership exchange brought together 107 youth aged 19-35.



Participants on the JustLead! programme came from all 9 provinces of South Africa representing both community and higher education institutions. Good working relationships were established with the staff of these institutions who aided in the recruitment of students.

Building on the foundation laid in 2018, this year was focused on developing and refining the programme. A collaborative approach was adopted between The Sophia Foundation, CSLS and our various partners in the review of course material, selection criteria and methods to enhance participants' skills development. These methods included the introduction of journaling, increased contact sessions, mentoring and monitoring.

"I've been exposed to many perspectives and inspired by the optimism and solutions I've heard from others. It's also been a huge growth area in terms of teaching me team work skills, time management and not being afraid to step up and act as the leader of a group".





Programmatic changes which proved successful included the addition of 20 mentors to guide students in their capstone project submissions. The mentors are alumni of the JustLead! programme who felt compelled to give back and remain connected. They also facilitated connections between students as doing an online course necessitated a new way of learning for many participants.

“I am now able to engage with people who not only think differently but behave differently and learn something from them. I think there is tremendous value in acknowledging that my views about issues can change and that it is not a sign of uncertainty but rather of growth.”

The programme benefited from experts from both the SU community and industry who facilitated the live seminars. These allowed students to engage with each other and the facilitators in discussion and reflection.

After a number of challenges this year where protest has become part of the new landscape at Universities, in South Africa and worldwide and after further consultation with The Sophia Foundation we have decided to do a complete review of the programme.



The course content will be redesigned to focus on internal growth and transformation more aligned to the vision, values and ethos of The Sophia Foundation. This is an exciting new development for us as we continue our Leadership journey in 2020.

“I challenged the notion that Leadership is not automatic and came to the conclusion that leaders must educate themselves, they must deliberately go through a self-development process”.



It has been a very rich and rewarding experience to work with these organisations. I wish to acknowledge the great contribution they are making to changing people's lives in their various fields of focus.

I would also like to thank my fellow trustees Koos Rossouw, Johan van Zyl and Jessica Chaplin for their continued guidance, encouragement and friendship and the many friends of The Sophia Foundation who have shown an interest in our work. Jessica Chaplin withdrew as our Development Manager this year with my full understanding and encouragement, to focus on her own project. As a trustee she remains in close contact helping to support and protect the work of the foundation. As we approach the end of the year and reflect on the year coming towards us, may we all feel empowered by the words of Wilhelm Ernst Barkoff, founder of the German ethical GLS Bank:

“We can only overcome our fear of the future we dread with images of a future we want.”

With my warmest wishes

Lorraine

Lorraine Forbes

Website: www.thesophiafoundation.org.za

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