

Thirst for Life Project Update

...where are we today?

January 2008

This is intended to update Thirst for Life (TFL) project volunteers, supporters, strategic partners, other stakeholders and prospective visitors. The TFL project is a 100% wholly owned subsidiary of the Swaziland Scout Association.

How did TFL start?

TFL is a project that was initiated after a meeting of two young people who attended the 8th World Scout Youth Forum held in Greece in 2002. Scouts from Avon planned an Expedition to Africa, which eventually came to the Kingdom of Swaziland through the two young people who kept in contact from July 2002 until the time a 21-member UK contingent touched the Swazi soil for the expedition in July 2005.

Executive Committees for the Avon County Scouts and the Swaziland Scout Association approved the project before any work started. It was indeed a high-level project, worth in excess of E200, 000 (about £15, 000 British Sterling Pounds). It was worth noting that it was jointly planned, executed and managed by young people from the two Scout Associations, UK and Swaziland. Daniel Wood and Bheki Metfula were designated project leaders in the UK and Swaziland respectively.

Initially the plan was to install a pump to supply clean water for the residents of Nkambeni community. After consultations with local authorities it transpired that a similar project is already underway, hence the alternative plan was to request a piece of land to construct a Scout Centre.

A meeting between local Scouts and authorities of the community coincided with a pre-visit by the project leaders from Avon, Dan Wood and Pete Sessions. Wood and Sessions attended the same meeting, which was chaired by the local Chief. The Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Excellency Themba Dlamini officially launched the project in July 2004. The occasion was held at the residence of British High Commissioner David Reader. Also present at the event was Minister for Natural Resources, Mfomfo Nkhambule, representatives from UN agencies, top Scout officials and the media.



L-R: HE David Reader, Dan Wood, Prime Minister Themba Dlamini and Pete Sessions

The piece of land was not granted to Scouts, until March 2005 when it was officially handed-over by Chief Madzanga Ndwandwe. This was yet another high-profile event attended residents, project strategic partners, top Scout officials and the media. The land measuring 14.1 ha (about 6 acres) lies in a beautiful slope, overlooking another hill and located at a perfect place to watch the sun rise in a warm summer morning.



Chief Madzanga in traditional attire points at the land he was giving to Scouts

What is at the Centre?

There are a number of key structures at the centre, which are a base for further development. The Centre has already made a significant difference to the lives of residents of the project area community. It is through the TFL Centre on a 'share costs basis' that two homesteads already enjoy the 'luxury' of electricity, which they would otherwise had taken much longer to get installed. There is a borehole and water pump installed with two 5000-litre water tanks. This enables the Centre to assist locals by providing clean water supply, making it a perfect gift for peace to the community.



Left: A Scout helps residents with clean water, Centre: A vegetable garden below storehouse, Right: A shed for village chickens

The Centre assists the community in providing supply of clean water, and cultivates vegetables for the volunteers who manage it. A two-in-one ventilated pit latrine toilet was built together with a storehouse with two shower shelters on the side. There is a picnic/caravan park a volleyball pitch still under construction.

There is ample space for camping, a campfire place and an arena with flag poles. The Centre has arable land with fields suitable for cultivating crops such as maize, ground nuts, sweet potatoes, etc. These fields have already been cultivated with maize and sweet potatoes courtesy of funds from the WSB/Africa Regional Office in 2006.

A portion of the Centre is suitable for livestock farming. It is already earmarked for cattle feed lot, goats and pigs. These projects require substantial capital to which the Centre management has already started approaching strategic partners. School for the Christ from Bristol has already responded positively with seed capital to the value of £1, 400 (E18, 200) towards this initiative. The Centre is still working on the required structures as well as other requirements as defined by the government's ministry of agriculture.



Left: The barbecue (braai) stand. Centre: Ross McDonald from Newcastle at the Centre. Right: Newest structure at the Centre

A barbecue stand has just been completed next to another new structure still under construction, courtesy of Newcastle Scouts. Newcastle Scouts offered support estimated to be valued at £2, 000 (E25, 000). This new structure will be a semi-open meeting/dining area with a kitchen just next to the storehouse. Available equipment consists of a gas cylinder and stoves, cutlery, big and small tents, two-in-one table and chairs, pots and other equipment, i.e. spades, slashers, axes, saws, buckets, basins, etc. The Centre was fenced with barbed wire to protect all the structures

Does TFL have anything to write home about yet?

In a space of two years, the Centre has already hosted two contingents for Scouts from Avon and Newcastle both in the UK for at least two weeks each. The two parties have made a significant development to the Centre. In fact the major developments at the Centre were mainly funded by the two parties. Our Newcastle friends were very lucky to have a rare opportunity to meet His Majesty King Mswati III during a Scout Patron's Day.

Hertfordshire Scouts, Denmark Guide and Scout Aid, CASEGHA Scout and Guide Fellowship in USA, Scout friends from Radio Society in Ireland, Swaziland Society in the UK and Hong Kong Scout friends have supported the TFL project in many different ways. Other international supporters include School for the Christ in Bristol, UK and the WSB/Africa Regional Office.



Left: Local Scouts pose in England, Centre: Emavulandlela (Scouts) with Dan from Avon at Heathrow Airport, Right: John Doble pose with locals in UK.

Local supporters are mainly local Scout volunteers, their parents and schools, residents of the project area community and its leadership and the media. Other key local supporters include SNYC, SWADE and different government ministries.

The Centre has already enjoyed the privilege of welcoming the then SNYC Chairman, Patrick Gamedze, former Acting Chief Scout, Peter Mtetwa.

Other important visitors include the newly-appointed SSA Chief Scout, Richard Magongo. He was at the Centre to officially open a Patrol Leader Training Course held on December 8-15, 2007. This was the third time Magongo visited the Centre in a space of two years. His first visit was in March 2005 during the hand-over ceremony by the local Chief. Magongo returned in May 2006 accompanying two WSB/ARO Executives, Winston Adams and Gathogo Ngugi. The two were in the country on a separate Scouting mission, however found it proper to visit the Centre. On the two occasions Magongo was Chief Commissioner and only visited as Chief Scout in December 2007.

Two Danish Scout officials, who were in the country on another Scouting mission had the opportunity to visit the Centre.

Does TFL have any other things to celebrate?

It is so amazing how TFL has contributed in developing young people over the few years. Many of them are holding key SSA positions today. Of great interest is the former CMT (Core Management Team) Deputy Chairman who is today the second in charge of SSA operations and the first lady to hold that position.

The TFL Coordinator has also been elevated to the position of Director still on voluntary basis, effective January 1, 2008.

	WHAT WAS HE/SHE THEN? <i>(As at March 2005)</i>	WHAT HE/SHE IS TODAY? <i>(As At December 2007)</i>
Ms Zodwa Gama	Deputy Chairman, TFL CMT & Section Commissioner, Disabled	Deputy Chief Commissioner
Mr Vusi Dlamini	Chairman, TFL CMT & Regional Commissioner, Shiselweni	Special Projects Commissioner
Mr Mangaliso Ndaba	TFL Volunteer Project Officer	Field Development Officer, DANIDA Project
Mr Nkosinathi Nxumalo	TFL Volunteer Project Officer later Unicef Project Coordinator	Public Relations Officer
Mr Hezekiel Tfwala	TFL Volunteer Project Officer later JOTA Coordinator	JOTA/JOTI Coordinator
Mr Gcina Dlodlu	TFL Volunteer later Deputy Regional Commissioner, Hhohho	Regional Commissioner, Hhohho
Mr Sicelo Maziya	TFL Volunteer, helping on Management Issues	Businessman
Mr Mzwandile Mkhonta	TFL Volunteer & Deputy Area Commissioner, Lobamba	Section Commissioner, Lusoti
Mr Sibonakaliso Mdluli	TFL Volunteer later Chairman, National Rover Council	TFL Representative, FAO Project
Mr Bheki Metfula	TFL & 2007 Coordinator	TFL Director & Programme Commissioner

Does TFL have exciting plans for the future?

TFL is working on developing the Centre to a preferred tourist destination, in collaboration with the project area community and in partnership with strategic partners. This is aimed at benefiting both Scouts and the community.

- The Centre will host an international camp on July 31 to August 11, 2009 mainly targeting Scout friends from Europe.
- Another plan is to link School for the Christ in Bristol with a local primary school, preferably from the project area community.



'Explorer Belt' Awardees L-R: Colani, Penelope, Mthandeni, Mangaliso

- The Centre will also organise expeditions for young people both Scouts and non-Scouts, inspired by the first one was organised in July 2005. 4 local Rover Scouts took part and were later awarded the 'Explorer Belt' while in the UK in August 2006.

What is TFL presently working on?

TFL already has a draft strategic development plan for 2008-2012. The following activities are extracted from the same plan...

1. First and foremost, TFL is working towards being an internationally-accredited tourist destination, and becoming a WOSM-accredited Scout Centre.
2. TFL is working on ways to make a difference to the lives of 'children at risk' by offering useful and relevant life skills and availing the Scout programme.
3. The Centre is working on producing a professional audio-visual documentary, 'The Thirst for Life Story' which may be shared with others organising similar projects.
4. TFL is also working on a number of revenue generating initiatives to ensure the Centre enjoys sustainability and growth.
5. The Centre will host an International Camp on July 31 to August 11, 2009. International friends are invited to come and experience Scouting the TFL way, under the skies of Africa.
6. TFL will establish a 'Thirst for Rinkaby Fund' which aims at assisting deserving but underprivileged local Scouts to attend the 22WSJ in Sweden by 2011

Who are TFL supporters to date?

List of supporters in alphabetical order...

1. Buhlebuyeza Royal Kraal and the Nkambeni Community
2. Scouts and other friends from Avon County, UK
3. School for the Christ in Bristol, UK
4. Scouts and Guides Fellowship in USA, CASEGHA
5. Scouts and Guides Aid, Denmark
6. Scouts from Hertfordshire, UK
7. Scouts from Hong Kong
8. Scouts from Newcastle, UK
9. Scouts from Ireland
10. Swaziland Society, UK
11. Swaziland Agricultural and Development Enterprises (SWADE)
12. Swaziland Media
13. Swaziland National Youth Council (SNYC)
14. Dr Themba Ntiwane
15. Mr Timothy Vilakazi

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