

# NET VIR PRET

## PROGRESS REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2020



Socially distanced youngsters waiting to enter our Centre

### COVID 19

The national lockdown on 24 March forced us to close our centre to youngsters and suspend all our usual programmes, but we were able to get permission from the authorities to continue operating in the delivery essential services and over the months we engaged in the following activities:

**MASKS** - the mass production of face masks for distribution in our community. To date we have made over 2,000.



Mask making

**SOUP** - the distribution of nourishing soup to 50 needy families on a daily basis. In this we were helped by **Lisa and David Hooley, Ren Engelbrecht and David Halkett.**

**FOOD GARDENS** - **Herman Witbooi** and his **Project Hope** team helped people establish their own vegetable gardens at 32 different sites across the township. **KaapAgri** donated much appreciated gardening equipment and the **Joubert Tradauw Cellar** kindly gave us over 500 sturdy poles which helped us provide secure fencing both for the gardens and also for our Centre. Get a glimpse of what we're doing by following this link - <https://youtu.be/oVWjjNzSfeo>



Delivering soup

**ACTIVITY PACKS** - 200 packs containing colour-in books, puzzles and reading material were put together and distributed to our youngsters stuck at home under lockdown.

We were also able to deliver substantial food hampers to the homes of our children donated by the **Lunchbox Fund.**

## CAPACITY BUILDING

The months of lockdown provided us with the opportunity to embark on important capacity building for staff and Interns.

**Mickey Mentz** ran a cadet journalist programme with Interns and they are presently gearing up to conduct interviews during the **Barrydale Blooms Festival** in October which they will be writing up and posting to Facebook.

**Herman Witbooi** was able to spend a week in Cape Town working with **Handspring** puppet master



**Adrian Kohler** earlier in the year. Following on the Redfin Puppet Fish he made for them last year, he has been commissioned by the **Grootvadersbosch Conservancy** to design and build a giant puppet to represent their tiny indigenous and threatened Chameleon. He and the Project Hope team have been hard at work and the puppet is almost ready.

After attending training last year provided by **ASSITEJ** (the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People) where they learned new skills to take into the aftercare programme **Sudonia Kouter** and Interns were able to participate in the Assitej 2020 Winter School which took place online. Sudonia made a presentation on the impact the pandemic has had on our community and how our Centre has become a true anchor for everyone in these difficult times.



Specialist **Charl van Zyl** has been providing extensive and ongoing training in audio-visual recording which has brought valuable new skills to staff and Interns and this has resulted in 5 productions to date:

**Virus !!!** - a video rap about Covid written and performed by **Selavor Platjies** which can be viewed by following this link <https://youtu.be/VFDxR5iK434>

**Get Tested !** - a video featuring giant puppet and human characters about the pandemic devised and performed by our Interns and filmed by **Nataniël Pokwas** which we sent to an online puppetry festival at the **University of Tehran**. Link - <https://youtu.be/AIl68abJqdQ>

**Barrydale Time Capsule** - a video featuring our Young Leaders describing their hopes and fears for the future which was part of a project organised by the **Reina Sofia Museum** in **Madrid** which invited teenagers from around the world to participate. All submissions have been buried in a time capsule in the garden of the museum to be unearthed in 2050 when all participants will be contacted again.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D26jU3Y-fDk&authuser=0>



**Imaginary Futures** - video performances by staff and Interns on a national online project co-ordinated by the **University of the Free State** with 35 participants from around the country.

**Remembering Liezl Booysen** - a memorial video commemorating the short life of a 14 year old who was brutally murdered in our village recently. Liezl had attended our aftercare programme until a year or two ago.

Liezl had attended our Aftercare programme until a year or two ago and her two younger siblings, a boy and a girl, have been on our Children at Risk watch all year. Link <https://youtu.be/FnYStuHxd-w>

## LEVEL ONE



The easing of the lockdown has allowed us to reopen the Centre and it was a great pleasure to see our youngsters again. We are of course obliged to comply with all the safety protocols –



deep cleaning before youngsters arrive, before we feed them and again after they leave,



temperature checks, hand washing and social distancing. The latter requirement has forced us to restrict the number of youngsters who can attend on any day and we have had to work out a rota system to accommodate everyone.

The **Eco Warriors** with volunteer **Reuben Hart** and our Director **Peter Takelo** have resumed their activities by tackling pollution which had gathered under a bridge over our Huis River. See them at work at this link –

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VXyVon-mo70CgEkJ\\_dByClikYTpr0q8h/view?usp=drivesdk](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VXyVon-mo70CgEkJ_dByClikYTpr0q8h/view?usp=drivesdk)



As part of our **Heritage Day** celebrations on 24 September we took youngsters to visit the forgotten graves where their ancestors are buried in what later became the “white” cemetery under Apartheid.

They were also treated to a presentation on traditional Khoi medicinal herbs by a knowledgeable community member.

Youngsters on the Bike Programme were delighted by a donation from our **EDSA** friends in the **UK** who sent funds for the purchase of three new bikes.



## REBOOT EDEN

With the help of our partners at the **Centre for Humanities Research (UWC)** and the **Ukwanda Puppetry Collective**, we have been busy trying to re-imagine this year's December Day of Reconciliation Giant Puppet Show. The event has usually taken the form of a huge show with upwards of 150 participants performing before a capacity crowd of hundreds which clearly cannot happen this year.



The first show took place in 2010 and we have 10 years of performances behind us and our idea has been to celebrate this achievement by reviving puppets from the past and by using



them to develop 4 short 20-minute pop-up shows on

the theme of **Reboot Eden** which can be performed at different localities around the township and village. Work is already at an advanced stage. Herman and the Project Hope team are restoring the puppets, CHR's **Jane Taylor** and **Aja Marneweck**, director of many of the past shows, have spent time with us, as has the **Ukwanda** team and we are in regular contact by Zoom.

The **Reboot Eden** blog can be viewed at this link - <https://barrydaleparade.wordpress.com/>

We have also embarked on two other projects which aim to celebrate our 10 years of puppetry, music tutor **Gari Crawford** is producing a **CD** which captures the songs which our musicians have composed for the shows over the years and Nataniël with Charl's help is producing a **DVD** which captures video highlights from the shows.

## TALES OF THE ELDERS

Over the years our various Interns working on our oral history project have assembled a fascinating collection of stories told by their elders.

Barrydale author **Leslie Howard** has translated these into English from the original Afrikaans and we are planning to make them available in a bi-lingual publication with illustrations by our art tutor, **Cherie Roe Dirksen**. We are embarking on our first venture into crowd-funding to help make this initiative possible.



## PRAYER FLAGS OF HOPE



In these troubled times we have adopted an idea coming from **Michelle Berry** aiming to lift the spirits of our community by stringing up **Prayer Flags of Hope** across both parts of our divided village for the Christmas season.

We have decided on two themes – images from past shows which have often portrayed the plight of endangered animals, and also images which show laughter, joy, celebration and hope.



We have set a target of 1,000 flags and our youngsters and Interns guided by Cherie and **Clarisa Jonas** are hard at work producing them. Generous donations of cloth have



come in and **ColorScreen Cape** has presented us with a substantial donation of fabric paint. We are encouraging everyone in our village to contribute their own flags.

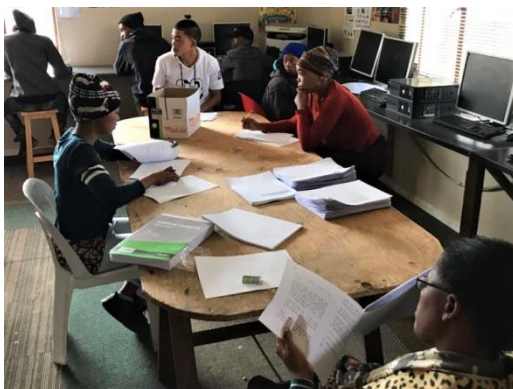
Special flags decorated by local artists and also featuring haikus from the **Barrydale Poetry Group** will be flown from the 12 flagpoles of the **Karoo Art Hotel**.

Our pottery tutor **Jean Bittkau's** students will make beads to weight the flags.



## COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAMME

We were entering into negotiations with the **Breede River Community Learning Centre (CLC)** based in Robertson to establish a satellite campus at our Centre when the lockdown brought everything to a halt.



CLCs are a new type of institution falling under the National Department of Higher Education and their role is to provide opportunities for anyone over the age of 15 to upgrade their academic level for employability or progression to further study.

We are delighted to report that this partnership is now in place. A total of 25 students ranging in age from 16 to 34 are registered and **Nolene Schoeman** and her team come up once a week from Robertson team to teach.

On the other days the students are able to access the interactive Eduplay educational software programme in our computer lab and to work on their assignments.