

The Sumbandila Scholarship Trust

Newsletter No. 5 - December 2009



Dear Friends of Sumbandila,

The Sumbandila Scholarship Trust was founded in 2007 by Leigh Bristow, currently the Executive Director of the Trust and James Corsellis of Marwyn Investments, London. It is governed by a Board of Trustees, all of whom have life-long professional experience in the fields of secondary education and community development. Sumbandila means, in the language of the local Venda people, “point out the road’ and expressed in more idiomatic English, it becomes “Show the Way”.

“Sumbandila’s vision is the transformation of underprivileged children with exceptional potential into entrepreneurs and leaders who make significant contributions to society and their own communities”

The Trust’s mission is to provide deprived children with a high quality secondary education alongside a strong mentorship programme, nurturing both leadership potential and entrepreneurial skills while encouraging social responsibility and awareness. We develop children’s potential through both academic education and practical experience and empower them with a belief and the ability to make a difference in their communities. We encourage both Western and African values, “Service in Leadership” and “Ubuntu: becoming a person in and through other people.”

Our programmes

Sumbandila’s work is divided into two separately funded programmes with substantial integration and overlap between the children, the facilities used and the staff members involved. The Sumbandila Full Scholarships are a programme for those scholars who have been selected, from backgrounds of extreme poverty, on the basis of academic achievement and outstanding potential for full bursary support. It is a residential programme based on the curriculum offered at Ridgeway College, a small but highly academically successful independent school. The school programme is buttressed by mentorship programmes, guidance, additional lessons, the development of entrepreneurial skills and educational trips.

The process of selecting the full scholars brought the Sumbandila Trust into contact with a group of learners who, although they were not selected were nevertheless talented, determined, ambitious and capable of performing very well academically and making a substantial contribution to society. These learners are now in secondary schools, even the best of which are under-resourced and over-crowded and in which conditions militate against the development of their potential. Through the Outreach Programme, Sumbandila provides intensive educational support and mentorship in core areas to these learners through Saturday and Holiday Schools and partners with the Study Trust to pay the costs of items such as school fees and uniforms. The involvement of the Full Scholars in the Outreach Programme provides them with an opportunity to give something back to other children from their communities of origin.

This, our fifth Newsletter, will keep our friends and supporters in touch with some of the happenings around our programmes. Please do pass it on and also have a look at our new website: www.sumbandila.org where there is more information about the history of the Trust and a link to a film about the first Sumbandila scholars.



Sumbandila Full Scholarships



The Sumbandila scholars with Leigh Bristow, Mike Linden, Gill Enslin and Phil Mapfumo

The 2008 children, now in Grade 9, continue to make steady progress on the whole and this was reflected in successful sets of mid and end of year exam results. Where there are concerns about performance in some subjects, increased support is being given. Most importantly, the huge increase in maturity and self-confidence of the first nine Sumbandila scholars this year has been wonderful to see. They are fully

integrated into the life and activities of Ridgeway College and indeed distinguish themselves by their energetic and positive participation in sport, drama and many other aspects of College life. The 2009 intake, as predicted on the basis of the much more stringent testing we conducted, have done extremely well and all but one are in the top third of the class. They have adapted extremely well to the demands of the curriculum and we can confidently expect that they will continue to improve. Helped by the fact that they cope so much more easily with the academic demands, the second group have settled into both the College, where they have been, from the start, virtually indistinguishable from the other students, and the hostel remarkably quickly and very successfully.

Sumbandila Outreach Programme



The Sumbandila Outreach children

A total of 18 Saturday Schools and two Holiday Schools were held this year - substantially exceeding our original planning - and attendance by the 42 Outreach children has been exemplary. For next year, the teachers will be focusing on the development of a programme of work based on our experiences of the common gaps and weaknesses identified. We have decided to develop our own curriculum for Maths, English and Science for each Grade and these will be run irrespective of the teaching stage of the national curriculum in the various schools. Furthermore we intend to print and bind manuals and workbooks based on our curriculum for the children to take home and in this

way increase the intensity of our intervention as well as encourage cooperative learning with their peers in their own schools. The two Holiday Schools were a great success, blending academic lessons with other activities in a game orientated style of teaching, with much emphasis being given to holistic learning and choice. All of the teachers noted a significant improvement in the children's concentration and cognitive skills during each week as well as a notable improvement in their command of and willingness to use English. The response from the children made it clear that the active fun element in the program, particularly the use of entrepreneurial games, made them comfortable to engage the subjects and helped them to bond as a group.

Sumbandila News

The Sumbandila children at Ridgeway College

The Sumbandila children at Ridgeway College were extremely well represented at the Ridgeway College prize giving ceremony at the end of last term. Best achievements in Academic Excellence and Afrikaans went to Thumelo Mukwevho. The most improved Grade 8 was Hlamalani Mavukama and the most improved Grade 9 was Vhonani Makhado. The best achiever in Art was Sandra Ramabulanyana, the top chess player was Tumelo Setswadi and the most promising girl's soccer player was Vhonani. Hlamalani Mavukama received a senior netball award and played for the seniors although she is only in Grade 8. Finally, two of our Sumbandila girls participated in the school play this year and we were very proud of their commitment and their effort.

While the Grade 8s are indiscernible from other students at the College, the majority of them being in the top third, the Grade 9s are not all as strong academically although we have to remember that Sumbandila is not only about academic achievement. For example, Tumelo Setswadi, who is the weakest academically is good at chess and Accounting and shows a natural aptitude for business. Vhonani has grown so much as an individual and has such poise and confidence while also being tremendously compassionate. She, Phumudzo and Mbavhalelo are part of our new peer counseling programme. Particular mention has to be made of Shadrack Khorombi in Grade 8. When Shadrack arrived at Ridgeway he was 20% below the rest of his class in both English and Math's, he literally did not know how to cut out a picture and stick it in his book and he kept confusing the back and front of his exercise books when he wrote in them. The end of the year exams have shown, that while his English is still weak, his other marks are all on or above the class average and he achieved 68 % for Math's. He now has amazing confidence and his classroom organization is the same as the other children! It is so easy to underestimate the impact of a lack of sophistication and worldliness on a child's development. In a recent biology test the Sumbandila children were asked about the processes of respiration and photosynthesis in a fish pond. Whilst they very clearly explained and understood the relative levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide they also talked about the humans breathing. When asked how humans could live in a fish pond it became clear that they had no idea what a fish pond was!

The level of confidence that some of the children now have is best illustrated with a story from Grade 9 scholar Rosymary Mudzanani. Rosy was referred to a psychologist but when she arrived she found in the room students who were there to observe the session. She was not happy with this and insisted that they leave - this involved her telling the psychologist three times that she would not begin the session with them present. After her session she told us respectfully but firmly that she would not be going back to that psychologist because she did not focus while she was talking and in fact kept looking at her watch. This was extraordinary because Rosy felt empowered to question a person in authority and this would not, could not, have happened two years ago - we are succeeding!





Environmental Education

We have recently introduced environmental education lessons and activities to raise awareness about environmental issues and introduce the children to some of the many natural attractions in our area. The programme is being run by Bibi Linden who is leading Ridgeway College's transformation into a Wildlife and Environment Society / World Wildlife Fund Eco-School. For more information about Eco-Schools see the Wildlife Society's web pages at: <http://www.wessa.org.za/index.php/programs/Eco-Schools.html>



Environmental education lessons have become a feature of Sumbandila's programmes and educational field trips to the Hanglip forest in the Soutpansberg above Louis Trichardt have been undertaken. Bibi undertook her master's research in these forests and we were fortunate enough to have Dr. Norbert Hahn, a renowned local botanist, give up his time to help with the activities. In addition snake shows have been held for all of the Sumbandila children.

Local herpetologist Jabu Linden (ably aided by Aidan Bristow) gave informative lectures about reptile biology and hopefully dispelled some of the terrible myths about snakes! It was incredible to see all of the children confront their fears by holding a harmless snake and once one had taken the plunge, everybody did - albeit some with their eyes closed! Most of the children come from backgrounds of strong superstition and activities such as these really help to debunk such beliefs and boost their self-confidence.

Cool Globes

In October Ridgeway College was offered a fantastic opportunity to participate in the Cool Globes project. A United States based organisation, Cool Globes has organised artists, companies and schools all over the world to decorate plaster globes on the theme of climate change to be displayed to thousands of arriving participants at Copenhagen airport during the period of the International Climate Change conference. Ridgeway was lucky enough to be selected as the only contributing school from Africa and designed two globes for display. One of the 2008 Sumbandila Full Scholars, Rosy Mudzanani, wrote a story based on her own environmental footprint growing up in a rural village and how this was changing as she grows up. As one of the two winners of the school competition for the globe designs, Rosy's story, entitled 'Big foot. Small Print', was made the theme of one of the globes. Sumbandila is extremely proud of Rosy's contribution to this international climate change awareness campaign! More information about the Cool Globes campaign can be found on their website at www.coolglobes.org.



Reading development

The absence of books in the homes and schools of the children and the consequent difficulty in establishing reading habits is one of the greatest obstacles to a fully rounded education. The Full Scholarship students have access to the Ridgeway College library and we have also joined the municipal library. We have also established a special collection of books, maintained by one of our Full Scholars, which both the Outreach and Full Scholarship students are able to withdraw and take home with them. To date, eighty two books have been carefully selected in consultation with Mr. Maano Tuvani of Guyo Books in Louis Trichardt and purchased with money provided by The D.G. Murray Trust for this purpose. The books chosen fall mostly into the category of junior fiction and have proven very popular. So too have the biographies chosen, all of them biographies of famous South Africans such as Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and Yvonne Chaka Chaka. Additional books are currently being selected and ordered as a matter of urgency as the enthusiasm for reading that is fast developing amongst the children means that the demand will soon outstrip the supply!

Information Technology (IT)



Information Technology lessons are held in the Ridgeway College IT Centre where every child has access to an individual workstation. Coming as they do from a background of minimal technical knowledge where virtually none of them had access to computers, the progress, initially painstaking, has been significant and heartening. Each Sumbandila student has established an email account and they have since used this new medium of communication to email each other, 'meet' pen pals in the United States, send thank you letters to the staff and learnt how to attach digital pictures of themselves in their mails. Most recently, in the internet time allocated during lessons, the outreach students have begun to use the Google search

engine for researching projects set by teachers at their home schools. A wonderful donation from Marwyn, through their associated IT company, is on its way to us at the very moment. Having recently upgraded their computers they are sending all their old ones to us! These will be installed in the Sumbandila hostel so that the children can have access to them at night and on the weekends.

Entrepreneurial games

As part of our commitment to promoting entrepreneurial development across the Sumbandila programme we introduced the children to a number of games designed by the South African Institute for Entrepreneurship (SAIE). We had personal contact with the designers, Margie Worthington-Smith and James Thomas as well as



with the new CEO of SAIE, Robin Stead and for this and the donation of information technology training software for use in the Sumbandila programmes we are extremely grateful. The games themselves, including 'The 10 Commitments', 'The Best Game' and 'Dilemmas' exceeded expectations and proved to be highly adaptable to our circumstances, generating real enthusiasm amongst both the full scholars and outreach children. The Best Game in particular has been a very effective way of teaching and putting into practice entrepreneurial and thinking skills as well as

cooperative teamwork. The game operates at increasing levels of complication and challenge and so can be used frequently with the same group without repetition. Grade 8 scholar Kingsley Malange, a very confident boy and a natural entrepreneur who also excels academically, always makes the most money alongside our other natural born entrepreneur Mmathapelo Ramahuma who has the most phenomenal general knowledge! More information about SAIE's games can be found on their website at: <http://www.entrepreneurship.co.za>. We strive to introduce the children to entrepreneurial thinking and constantly reinforce this across all subjects and activities. Ultimately we would like them to reach a point where they are able to start their own small businesses!

Bead making



A bead-making workshop was recently held for the Sumbandila children. Calvin Baytopp, a Grade 10 Ridgeway College student, has designed his own glass bead furnaces with which he crafts and sells the most beautiful glass jewellery. Calvin and his mother Kerry were kind enough to give up an afternoon to show the children how it's done and everybody was given the chance to make and keep their own set of glass beads, artefacts many of the children have a strong cultural connection with.



Astronomy evenings

Regular Astronomy evenings have been held over the last few months for all the Sumbandila children. These evenings have opened up a whole new world (and distant worlds!) for us and Sumbandila is extremely grateful to Kos Coronaios for arranging the events. In the near future we look forward to training the telescopes onto our namesake, South Africa's new satellite - Sumbandila! Kos, who runs the Soutpansberg Astronomy Club has developed the Limpopo Astronomy Outreach Programme to introduce local school children to the science. His presentations are informative with visual, practical and technological aspects that make them extremely accessible and broaden the perspectives of the children. It is sometimes easy to forget exactly how lacking the backgrounds of some of the children are, characterised by an enormous gulf between fact and superstition. One of the children was heard to ask Bibi Linden following an Astronomy evening "Bibi, do you really believe in all that stuff?"



Extra Science Lessons

Extra science lessons focussing on microscope work and other laboratory techniques have been held on Saturdays in the Ridgeway College Science Laboratory's. These have been especially useful for the Outreach children who come from schools lacking in such facilities. So far the children have been learning about cells and preparing slides of plant and animal cells for viewing under the microscope. Many thanks to Ridgeway Science teacher Gill Enslin and Biology teacher Jernay McLeod for giving up their Saturdays to come and help.



Science teacher, Gill Enslin and Biology teacher Jernay McLeod have given up Saturdays to help teach microscope work and other laboratory skills to the outreach children

Rosy's poetry

Rosymary Mudzanani continues to grow both physically and intellectually but has had a difficult year emotionally and psychologically. She is an extraordinary character who never misses an opportunity to speak in public or read one of her poems. With the security and comfort of the Sumbandila Hostel and the withdrawal from her very unhappy previous circumstances she has now had time to reflect on her traumatic childhood which was worse than any of us previously imagined. She continues to express her sadness in her poetry and we include a particularly moving poem that she presented at our drama evening earlier this term.

Christmas party

In the last week of term we held the annual Sumbandila Christmas party and it was lovely for the children to spend an evening together with all the teachers and other people who have been involved this year. The children gave speeches and sang Christmas carols and presented the staff with presents before sitting down to eat turkey - four of them deliciously prepared by Jenny and Spud Macdonald.



Peer support

From the very beginning of the programmes some of the children indicated a need for counselling and we have been extremely fortunate to have the help of London based psychologist Philip Hewitt. Philip is the school counsellor at Westminster School, one of the top five independent schools in Britain and regularly visits Waterford Kamhlaba United World College in Swaziland where he has been instrumental in establishing that schools peer to peer counselling programme. Philip has visited Ridgeway and Sumbandila twice this year, for a week in July and for another week in October. He spent a considerable amount of time with the Sumbandila children as well as leading peer mentorship workshops and reviewing the systems we are currently developing. Four of our Grade 9 Sumbandila girls have been chosen to join the Ridgeway Peer Support Group with the aim of passing on to future Sumbandila intakes what they have learned from their own experience of the problems of adjustment and integration into the programme. Philip has also seen some of the girls to give individual counselling. We are very grateful to Philip for giving up his holidays to visit Sumbandila and we really look forward to seeing him again next year.



Philip Hewitt

Last night I

Last night I saw you
Hurting a little girl physically
‘Stop hurting her!’ I said

Last night I saw you
Wanting to kill yourself
Because you don’t love life
‘Life is a gift!’ I blared out

Last night I saw you
Working together,
Showing the right way
‘You are the leaders of our world’ I said

Last night I saw you
Stealing her money,
‘Why are you doing this?’
I whispered in your ear
The following day
I heard you telling her a lie
I walked in, my shadow appeared first
‘Stay honest!’ I spoke in a stern voice

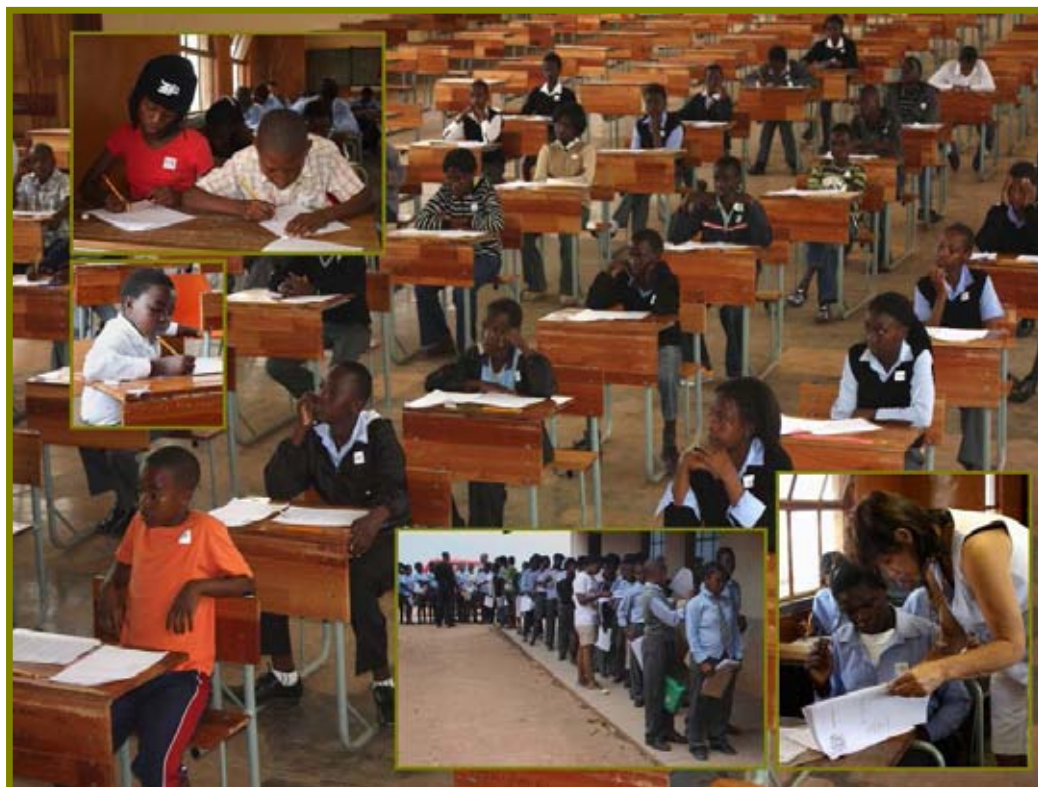
Last night I dreamt about you
Teaching young kids
The ten commitments
And I remember touching
You right here (on your shoulder)
‘Show the right way’ I mumbled

Last night I heard you
Judging how she walks and
Judging how she eats
‘Remember to judge others objectively’
I grumbled

Last night I heard you
Shouting at a little girl
Telling her that she was worthless
And ought to go to work
‘Respect her rights!’ I shouted

Written by: Rosymary Mudzanani
Sumbandila 2008 scholar

Testing for the 2010 intake



November was a busy month for the Sumbandila staff and student volunteers as hundreds of children from scores of primary schools were tested for the 2010 intake. Four Ridgeway girls, fluent in Venda and/or XiTsonga proved indispensable as invigilators and translators - **'Ndo livhuwa'** to Musiiwa Ramuenyiwa, Senwelo Raulinga, Bokang Mpeta and Nyeleti Mugari. Testing was held at five schools over three Saturdays and a further two testing sessions were offered at Ridgeway College. Once again we were struck by the sight of

children streaming out of the bush to the venues while hopeful parents waited outside. Extremely impressive was the commitment shown by teachers and principals, many of whom gave up their Saturdays to bring children long distances to the venues. This underlined for us again both the desperate need and the huge hunger for opportunity in our district and it is always saddening to us that we are able to help only a few. Marking the tests has proved yet again the remarkable potential of some of these children, coming as they do from impoverished backgrounds and terribly under-resourced schools.



Andy Walford with the Sumbandila Scholarship children

Funder's visits

In March we hosted Andy Walford from our principal Full Scholarship funders, Marwyn Investments and in November we hosted, for the second time, Bart Fuijkschot of the Ir Felix August Schippers Stichting. It was an absolute pleasure to show both of them around the programme and to introduce them to the children. It meant a great deal to the children to be able to meet and interact with people who have given them such an unimaginable opportunity.

In January Claudia Shaw from Marwyn will be visiting us and we would be delighted to have future visits from as many of you as can manage to come.

Staff

Jenny Macdonald was employed in April to take over the logistical side of Sumbandila after Leigh Bristow was appointed as Principal of Ridgeway College and has done an absolutely amazing job in terms of both efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Jenny manages the administration of the Sumbandila hostel (even building paths to link the two houses!), banking, shopping, transport as well as organizing the testing and all the day to day administration. Gill Enslin and Phil Mapfumo continue to be the mainstays of the care provided at the hostel, with the invaluable assistance of Alma Mapfumo and Tshilidzi Ravhuhali. Two other teachers, Celia Temlett, English teacher at Ridgeway, and Mollin Madziva, a teacher at Ridgeway Independent primary school, also live at the Hostel and provide extra tuition and supervision. A number of Ridgeway staff and others have been involved in teaching and organising events for the Saturday and Holiday Schools and our sincere thanks are especially due to Donald Fridjhon, Carolyn Ingram and Phil Mapfumo as well as to Mike, Jabu and Bibi Linden. In addition, Sumbandila Full Scholarship students regularly assist with the Outreach Programme.

Funding

We have been incredibly fortunate to have the continued support of our principal funders, Marwyn Investments and the partners and associates levered by them (as listed below) for the Full Scholarship programme. The D.G. Murray Trust has significantly extended their funding for the Outreach Programme for which we are enormously grateful and our partners, the Study Trust, continue to be a source of advice and support across our programmes. We have approached numerous possible donors this year for funding to extend the Full Scholarship programme but so far, although there have been many encouraging responses, nothing definite has yet been promised. One of our frustrations is that many of the responses from potential donors indicated that we are still too small an organisation to be an attractive recipient which makes it difficult to grow - we are therefore extremely grateful to our existing funders for their belief in us! It seems that we will have to accept the strong possibility that we will not have a new intake of Full Scholarship students at the beginning of 2010. We are undertaking a far more comprehensive fundraising programme and are looking into the affordability of a professional fund raiser. We are determined to raise money for the intake of at least a few full scholars during next year.

Our sincere gratitude is due to the following individuals and organisations, all of whom have contributed to the Sumbandila Scholarship Trust:

Joel Baker, Rebecca Gilmore, Antoinette Vanderpuije, Simon Pincombe, Andy Walford, Vanessa Bolger, Charles Vivian, Amanda Stratford, Adrian Carey, Amanda McKinlay, Aaron Stocks, Michael Nouril, Stephen Eames, Rob Hamill, Peter Molloy, Steve Francis, Joshua Kaye, Andrew Wildman, David Clasen, James Maxwell, Mark Lee-Amies, Gavin Russell, Simon Glucina, Darren Throop, Keith Tozzi, Justine Dobbs-Higginson, Sean Nutley, Peter Watts and Oliver Pawle.

Marwyn Investments, LEK Consulting, Entertainment One, Concateno, Co-Investment Capital, Silverdell, Whitehead Mann, Edge Architecture and Design, Travers Smith, Jones Day, Mazars, Mayer Brown International, Edison Investment Research, Barclays Corporate Banking, Investec, Ernst & Young, J P Morgan Cazenove, Singer, Deloitte, Bourner Bullock and Wavex.

The D.G. Murray Trust, Murray Hofmeyer and the Study Trust, Bart Fuijkschot and the Ir Felix August Schippers Stichting, Ingvil Foss, Themba Linden, Loraine Cripwel, Heather and Harry Mithen, Peter and Renate Heikamp, Hans-Peter and Gabi Rösch and Rex and Rosemary Bloor.



From the Director

This year has been an incredibly busy year for Sumbandila and it has been wonderful to see the steady progress of our 18 Full Scholarship children at Ridgeway College. The development of the Outreach Programme has been an equally satisfying process and I feel that after the first year we now have a vision for the future development of this programme as well as the involvement of a diversity of committed people who will help us do that. We enter 2010 with a real awareness of the difficulties we face but also with the confidence that our team has the skills and dedication to make it a year of success and growth.

As I witness the difference in the children on the Full Scholarship program from those on the Outreach Programme and grapple with the enormous difference in cost, I need to remind myself that it is not just academic progress that we are seeking to develop, but practical intelligence and confidence. Whilst we actively encourage their innate talents and skills we are also developing their ability to express their opinions, to question, to reason and to negotiate. Whilst their very humble rural upbringing has given them both creativity and independence, in this new environment we seek to give them the confidence to be comfortable and in control in a variety of settings. It is, as Gladwell writes in his fascinating book "Outliers" - procedural, it is the knowledge that helps you read situations and get what you want, it is about knowing how to do something without necessarily being able to explain it. This is a difficult skill to quantify and yet some parents automatically impart it to their children whilst others do not, but it is critical for survival in the modern world. Certainly it is very much part of what we are trying to achieve in terms of entrepreneurial thinking.

I am particularly grateful to my fellow Trustees for their support and guidance, to all the staff at Sumbandila, to the staff of Ridgeway College involved in Sumbandila to Jabu Linden for all his work on reports, fundraising proposals, the website and so much more, to Bibi Linden for the environmental education, to Carolyn Ingram for Saturday schools, to Donald Fridjhon for the mentorship program, to Charmaine Waller and Antoinette Vanderpuije and Sheldon and Prinsloo for the financials to Andrew Hofmeyer for the films and all the other individuals who have given up their time and expertise to assist in a myriad of different ways.

My thanks as always go to our main funders and partners - Marwyn Investments and their partner donors, The D.G. Murray Trust, the Study Trust, the Ir Felix August Schippers Stichting and Ridgeway College as well as to all the generous individual donors whose continued support enable us to continue 'u sumba ndila'.

Finally and most importantly I would like to thank James Corsellis for helping me make Sumbandila a reality and for his enormous generosity of spirit and vision.



Leigh Bristow

Executive Director
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