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THE UTHANDO PROJECT *Newsletter*

UTHANDO PROJECT DECEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

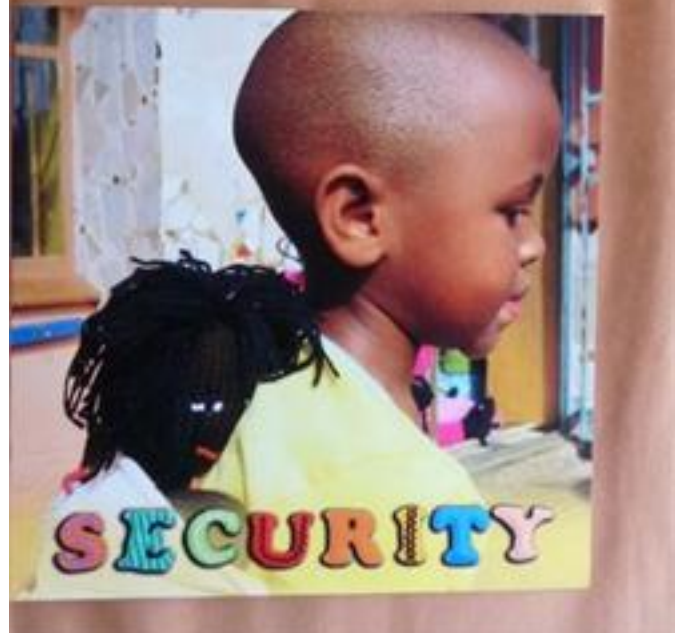
Dear Uthando dollmakers and friends,

So much to report about for this half of the year. As always nothing would happen if it weren't for the immense support and contribution of hundreds of Uthando folk in Western Australia, the other Australian states and overseas. Often the dolls sent from overseas are quietly provided directly to TREE (Training and Resource in Early Education), so here is a fanfare of thanks to dollmakers everywhere.

When our partner organisations in KwaZulu-Natal provided their vision, their stories and photographs to go into our book, "100 DOLLS, COUNTLESS HEARTS", it created a new surge of closeness and understanding.

These images are from the tall banners in our CHOGM exhibition.

You will find them in our book.



Tamsen Rochat's description of the Africa Centre's research project with HIV+ mothers disclosing their status with sensitivity and new knowledge to their children brought us into the Zulu homes.

Dlalanathi's pictures of the mothers and gogos with their thoughts and stories of

relationships with the children in their care gave us real people...real people to cherish and admire their fortitude.

The photo of the boy's hands about to wheel his doll in the centre of a tyre makes me laugh each time I see it. That photo came from TREE who illustrated the many ways that dolls are seen and used and comforted by the children.

Tears prickle the eyes over reading the case studies of just four out of thousands of children damaged through the effects of HIV/AIDS and social disintegration and then helped by the compassionate consistent work of Lifeline.

“100 DOLLS, COUNTLESS HEARTS” gives every reader insight into the universality of play and childhood experiences no matter where we were born or how old we are. The hundred portraits and stories tell us that. The feedback right across the board has been wonderfully positive. Crafts people are delighted with the generosity of patterns. Lecturers and teachers will make full use of the multicultural stories and practical information in their work. Libraries want it. It is a book to be shared with family and friends. Retired graphics lecturer and writer, Rosie Barter writes, “.....enough weight to justify the effort, a perfect size and dimension, a sturdy female handful. The photographs...each person distinctive, unposed, real and engaging. The story, via the stories, is thoughtful, vivid and told in a consistent voice.

The visual quality is easy to assimilate, a book that calls me to flick, stop, read, thumb back, wonder about. The heart of Uthando is profoundly communicated.”



In four weeks we have sold 600 copies and engaged in conversation hundreds of people in introducing them to Uthando.

We are extremely grateful to the City of Swan and to the national and the state branch of AAIMHI, the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health who have contributed funds towards the printing of our book.

The very first of our books were taken to London by the founder and Director of Uthando Project, Dr Julie Stone.

Julie writes; *I have just returned from London where I met up with my colleague Dr Astrid Berg from Capetown. We both work as Infant, Child & Family Psychiatrists*

and were in London to be part of an international forum discussing the emotional health and well being of very young children, at the Anna Freud Centre.

Astrid, is part of the organising committee for the World Association for Infant Mental Health [WAIMH] Congress to be held in Capetown in April, 2012. Georgia, myself and members of the Dlalanathi Team will take part in the Congress where the exhibition of dolls will be displayed.

Astrid was delighted to receive a copy of our book and she is excited about Uthando & Dlalanathi being part of the WAIMH meeting in April.

COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Our major event has been CHOGM in Perth, where we estimate that over 1000 very multicultural children enjoyed dressing Uthando dolls ready to go to KwaZulu-Natal. One boy wrote on his label letter, "I hope having this doll makes you sleep better."



After a very wet opening, the sun shone for Friday and Saturday. Hundreds of children sat on the carpet and dressed the "naked" Uthando dolls with all the dresses, pants, tops, handbags. It is a privilege to see families create such precious moments together and to be so interested in the lives of the children of South Africa.



Boys and girls of all ages loved dressing the dolls. You can see the basket full of Kay Daw's African animal puppets and Isabella Cowin's boy and girl puppets. We could have sold them all, but they are not for sale. They are for the children in KZN.

All of the dolls featured in this CHOGM exhibition have their patterns in the book. You are invited to photocopy these patterns to share with others, or of course to promote further book sales! The sewing patterns can be enlarged to suit your dollmaking or for easy vision for reading the knitting patterns.

There are in fact over 40 patterns provided for knitting and sewing.

Dads could spend time with their children as well.

The area that we were in was called "People's Space" filled with Western Australian crafts and other marquees devoted to agencies supporting philanthropic work.

We were entertained by free street theatre actors, singers and performers until the early evening. There was delicious food from all cultures. Outside the museum were large, unusual musical instruments ready for anyone to play. Photographers from the different Commonwealth countries wrote the story of their photo. Many of these opened everyone's eyes to the courage which people faced life in tougher circumstances than our "Lucky Country".

It
is



impossible to sufficiently thank all the dollmakers who made the dolls and the clothing for the Dressing of the Dolls at CHOGM.

Being a grass roots organisation where much of the work is anonymous, we have to trust that the sense of accomplishment is enough fulfilment.

This photo does give us a glimpse into a child's world representing a child anywhere.

PART OF THE FELT MURAL OF DOLLS FEATURED IN THE BOOK

Lynne Tognolini's lifetime skills of bringing creative ideas together shine in the six metre long mural of the dolls in the book. Many hands sewed the African background together and then the individual dolls followed.

On the left of the picture can be seen a part of the dolls which are freestanding.

Above the zebras is the beginning of a series of dollmakers portraits taken by our book designer and photographer, Natalija Brunovs.

BOOK LAUNCHING AT THE KALAMUNDA ZIGZAG FESTIVAL



Jo Randall, who has been instrumental in taking the dollmaking to the Aboriginal communities in Halls Creek, gave just the right introduction in launching the book at the Kalamunda ZIGZAG festival with many dollmakers present.

Picture; Taku Scrutton, Jennifer Muir-Dick, Kay Daw, Clare Harris (Uthando secretary), Georgia Efford and Di Blesing beside our Uthando stall in the park.

DOLLMAKERS PROMOTE OUR BOOK

Many new friendships emerged during the preparatory workshops introducing Uthando dollmaking and principles to many multicultural groups in Perth and Albany. Some of these new migrant women were able to come to the Kalamunda book launching giving a lot of pizzazz to the event.

Photo: Tina Umoh, born in Nigeria, now with her children going to Swan View Primary School, brings happiness to all around her.

Please read about her childhood in our book. She is a great asset to Uthando as she worked in South African hospitals for many years becoming very familiar with the tragedies of AIDS.



BOOK REPLACEMENT POLICY

As with many new enterprises there are some set backs. We have painfully discovered that some of the books have had pages fall out due to a problem with the glueing process. Our printers have acknowledged this fault and will reprint the whole run of 2000 books again. This is a very realistic and hugely generous response from them as it is intended that the book be sold in optimum condition to libraries, schools and through the normal book and craft retailers.

If you have a book, or know of any others who may have a copy, where the pages are loose, please return it via post to

Uthando Project, 355 Belmont Ave, WA 6105.

Or deliver it to the same address or to me, **Georgia Efford, 2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill** to receive a replacement.

Any postage costs will be reimbursed and all replacement postage costs covered by Uthando Project. Please include your name and postal details on a slip inside the cover of the returned book.

This fault has been a terrible source of worry for everyone involved in the selling of the book. We hope that most buyers are informed of our replacement policy.

Please encourage your local library and schools to buy our book through Westbooks.

If you know of bookshops or craft retailers who might be interested in stocking

“100 DOLLS, COUNTLESS HEARTS”, please let me know to follow up. Of course we welcome orders from our dollmakers and friends. All books will be checked for sturdiness before we send them.

The price of eachbook is \$35, with a special deal of 3 copies for \$100.

Please add \$14 for P & P for anywhere in Australia, or \$11 for within the Perth metro area.

For other quantities and addresses overseas please enquire from Lis, see below.

Please place your book orders with our Treasurer, Lis Hansen on uthandoproject@hotmail.com

BOOK INCOME AND SALE OF DOLLKITS MEANS FUNDS FOR DLALANATHI IN KZN

Already we have sent \$14,000 to dlalanathi last month as a result of book sales, donations and income from the dollkits. The ongoing income from book sales will be of great benefit to dlalanathi's financial security contributing to administer their programmes into 2012.

People often ask “what do you really need in the way of materials, etc for Uthando?”

Well, considering the creative colour sense in the hands of Anne Bell, Di Cunningham and Colleen Hubbard who have now made 3000 practical dollkits in 2 years, we would reply.....please donate bright knits or cotton or polyester type fabrics for doll's clothing, black and brown wool for bodies and hair, all sorts of textured wool for clothing knitters. We can always use elastic, buttons, Velcro, cord, ribbons, braid, lace, beads with large holes, felt. Fine black, red or white crochet thread is very useful for face embroidery.

Avoid giving pastel colours, white or black materials and baby wool.

Many schools buy the kits and they are sought after when we have a festival stall.

2012 UTHANDO EXHIBITIONS

Thinking of festivals, please note in your 2012 diary that we will exhibit the marvellous doll exhibition from CHOGM at the Midland Junction Arts Centre between 11 – 26 February. There will be some hands' on activities during that time if you would like to participate. Similarly in the Western Australia Museum, Albany during March where in the past few months, under the leadership of Julie Fletcher, a very active Uthando dollmaking group is moving out into their communities.

UTHANDO DOLLMAKING WARRIORS

Irene Gill (now Swan) visited Perth from Tasmania to give us a hand during CHOGM. Irene is creating Uthando Project contacts in schools and craft groups there. Kay Daw is always delighted when another knitter sends their versions of her South African animal patterns. Irene's bikini clad hippo (from another pattern) was cuddled by many at CHOGM and many viewers wanted to buy Kay's animal puppets immediately. If any knitter has an earlier version of Kay's poster patterns without the Zebra head corrections, please get in touch with me to give you the right instructions. A simple knitting error can drive you nuts!

Photo; Irene Swan with her famous hippo at the CHOGM marquee.



Judy Macintosh passes on our gratitude to all the residents of the Bentley Park Retirement Village. Judy usually arrives absolutely laden with brightly coloured sewn and knitted dolls, lovely rainbow coloured wraps and balls. Maude Taylor at 102 years confidently knits her cuddly dolls showing there is always time for the loving expression of able hands.

Jennifer Muir-Dick, whose photo in our book of her knitted warrior perfectly matches the boy holding it, has a letter in the Christmas Edition of the international magazine **“Simply Knitting”**. She is already getting responses from knitters in other countries wanting to contribute directly to Uthando through TREE. Jennifer also has our poster patterns on eBay steadily selling.

Lynne Jones has new members coming to her monthly gathering at Mosman Park, WA. Also the dollmaking sessions at the One Stop Shop in Fremantle created a happy group continuing informally in making dolls.

Sandy Maher has achieved wonderful results in designing the Uthando doll to suit her Aboriginal girl students and dollmakers. Please read her story in the book.

DOLLMAKING EMBRACED BY SCHOOLS

A vital part of Uthando's work is in schools everywhere. Our Schools Coordinator, Lynne Tognolini writes; *It has been a real pleasure and inspiration to visit so many different groups of generous and enthusiastic doll makers. Whether to introduce the project or to collect the amazingly creative dolls made by adults and children, the atmosphere is always one of genuine empathy, caring and commitment to improving the lives of the children in KwaZulu Natal. The positive energy that comes from every group I meet is such a special feeling.*

Because the Uthando Project seems to naturally embrace the wider school community, parent assistance with doll making has resulted in dolls which are more robust, which is essential for real play. Dolls with clothes that can be removed and changed around make playing fun, so they need to be well made. When dolls have been thoroughly checked at school to see that, for instance, the hair doesn't come off, or clothes are not sewn to the body, it means our Friday dollmakers are relieved of hours of fixing up dolls. Thank you to the dedicated teachers who have used this project to convey to their students the values of giving, compassion and love.

*Congratulations primary school students from **Augusta Primary, Karridale Primary, St Joseph's Primary, Sacred Heart Highgate, Aubin Grove, Subiaco Primary and Booragoon Primary.***

*Secondary school students from **Mater Dei College, All Saints Anglican College, Balcatta SHS, John XX111, and North Lake Senior Campus Intensive Language Centre** have contributed beautiful dolls.*

*Thank you to members and wives of members of **Midland Rotary, St John Ambulance Fellowship, All Saints Anglican Fellowship and Meerilinga.** What wonderful contributions have been made by doll makers from these organisations.*

During this end of year time, Lynne has given generously of her time and experience in visiting the schools for their major assemblies to receive the dolls and thank the students and staff. She always has heart warming stories of the dolls' farewells and what it means to the students to make a doll for a child in KZN.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Another of our coordinators is Iris Whitelock, Community Projects Coordinator, who writes of her recent Uthando experiences shared with her colleague, Aldy Bagnall.

Through June and July 2011, Aldy and I ran a series of four dollmaking workshops with an enthusiastic, talented and extremely productive group of 19 women from the Melville community. The workshops were funded by the second half of a grant from the City of Melville, the first half of which had been delivered in October/November 2010. City of Melville staff at Willagee Community Centre very generously accommodated us for the workshops, and then later on, when the centre became our southern metro photography studio for the Uthando book.

In July, I took doll-kits and stuffing to the Designing Women textile group's monthly meeting, explaining the work of Uthando Project and the dolls. Several excellent dolls, lots of outfits, and many knitted balls came from members of this group.

In August, Uthando Project collaborated with Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre and WA AIDS Council to run a series of five workshops which combined dollmaking activities with sexual health and parenting information and resources. These Train the Trainer workshops were presented to Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) community leaders, and funded by an Organisational Development grant from WA Department of Health, within the Sexual Health and Blood-Borne Viruses Program. The workshops were very successful, with several participants buying kits to start dollmaking with their existing community groups. More MMRC/WAAC/Uthando workshops are planned for 2012.

Aldy and I feel honoured to present these workshops for Uthando. We have enormous fun teaching the doll-making, and working and learning with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The community aspect of these sessions is very rewarding and stimulating, and we were thrilled at how many people declared their love of doll-making and produced multiple dolls and outfits! With every group, there was a reawakening of the joys and lessons of childhood, and memories of games, dolls and other toys came flooding back. It was a lovely acknowledgement to be able to include participants' dolls and stories in 100 dolls, Countless Hearts, a book which clearly illustrates the beautiful, inspirational heart of the Uthando Project.

SALVATION ARMY CRAFT GROUPS MAKE LOVELY DOLLS

Anne Bell who cheerily visits many other organisations says; *"Throughout the year the Salvation Army craft groups of Karrinyup, Morley and Swan have contributed bags of dolls. Many of them reflect the different skills and cultures of women who are new migrants to Australia, quite a few from African countries. When talking with these groups it is easy to see how the love of the doll crosses all barriers, be they language, race or creed. I am also made aware of the number of people out there working quietly and industriously for one charity or another. The Morley group worked very hard preparing the dolls for the CHOGM presentation. Thank you. I look forward to the continuing involvement with these groups in the coming year. Congratulations to you all."*

REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION

During 2011 there has grown a consolidation of Uthando Project led by independent leaders in Augusta (Bev Schroder), Waroona (Nola Turner) and Albany (Julie Fletcher). Their local schools or craft groups are responding with really well made dolls due to their inspiration. Then there are all the individual dollmakers or a dollmaker working with a friend who maintain their output on their own. Everyone recognises what it takes to keep going. Thank you to each dollmaker. Opening the parcels and bags is always an incredible delight.

There are those too with the Big Picture in mind who take the message and practicalities of the Uthando Project to conferences and meetings. Beryl Mort is one of these, setting the seeds for more connections in other states.

Uthando Project is an organisation that everyone can be proud of and find their

place within it that gives them creative fulfilment and the confidence of knowing that their doll will travel thousands of kilometres to a child's arms.

WORLD AIDS DAY



Thank you especially to everyone who comes or has visited on a Friday to do whatever is needed to express Uthando. Special acknowledgement is joyously due to our wonderful Treasurer, Lis Hansen and our Secretary, Clare Harris. We are blessed to have them.

We will resume meeting on February 3rd, 2012.

May all be well with you, and peace in the world,

Georgia and the Friday Team

georgia1@iinet.net.au 08 9293 2363

P.S. Today was World AIDS Day, Dec 1st. Uthando's work was acknowledged within the gentle, happy gathering.

THANK YOU TO TRISH LANGDON, CEO of Western Australian AIDS Council for her constant support of and interest in Uthando.

Our book was presented to 9 outstanding organisations and individuals. It was time also for reflection on the lives of those ended by AIDS with a candle set in the reflection pool and a red balloon released into the sky.

Final photo from the CHOGM doll dressing; A beautiful example of our common humanity and the qualities of childhood.

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