

## Christof and SASVO

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The Southern African Student Volunteers (SASVO), established by Christof Heyns in 1994, was one of his favourite initiatives. Three of the collaborators involved in the early years of the project each contributed their recollections of the origins, impact and spirit of this part of Christof's legacy.

### *Murray Hofmeyr: origins and first projects*

The period between 2 February 1990 and 27 April 1994 was characterised by hope, despair and hope. On 2 February President FW de Klerk, who died on 11 November 2021, gave that famous speech in Parliament. I was driving down from Sibasa in the then Republic of Venda, where we lived in Block Q, the staff housing area of the University of Venda, to the campus in Thohoyandou. The winding road down the hill always reminded me of the Neue Weinsteige, the road down into the city of Stuttgart. In the mid-1980s I studied at the Eberhardt-Karls-University in Tübingen in the then West Germany and often travelled to Stuttgart. One could scarcely think of two greater opposites, Thohoyandou and Stuttgart, and yet, the winding road into the valley below always made my overseas student experience present there where I now was a lecturer at a young university in one of the so-called TBVC states.

I learned about constitutional democracy in Germany. When I returned in 1987 the South African situation looked bleak from that perspective. Yet, I could sense a shift in the conversations I had with influential South Africans, the captains of industry and leaders in church, culture and society. My own experience is far from normative, but this is the story I tell – that my further inquiry led to the conclusion that the presentations Clem Sunter and others were giving on the Mont Fleur scenarios had an effect. I got the impression that influential people were starting to prefer the 'Flight of the Flamingo' – inclusive democracy and economic growth – to the ostrich politics that was clearly going to end in collapse.

And there I was driving down the hill on 2 February 1990 and for the first time in my life heard the word ‘rescinded’. I stopped at the side of the road, got out of the car and looked into the distance. I could not believe my ears and there were tears in my eyes.

In October 1993 Christof and family visited us in Venda where we were now living at the Thate Vondo Dam, in one of the most beautiful settings you can imagine. Christof and I went mountain biking in the lush sub-tropical forests. Near the top of the mountain, we stopped for a rest and continued our discussion on how we could contribute to the viability of the soon to be born ‘new South Africa’.

Both of us participated in ‘missionary work camps’ when students at the University of Pretoria. Mine was on the Makhathini Plains, a part of South Africa that I never experienced before. A group of students boarded a bus (it broke down several times) with camping gear and building equipment and stayed for a week or two at a site constructing a small church building for a distant ward of the local Dutch Reformed Church in Africa congregation. It was just a wonderful experience – adventure, friendship, romance, learning basic skills like how to mix cement and how to project manage a building operation – supply chain, workflow, team building, task allocation according to skills, the works. There were also many fights – not all team members became friends for life – and valuable lessons learned about conflict resolution, how to cooperate with people with different personality types, and that ‘we doing it for *them*’ was not a good idea.

Many years later, lying on the grass in the shade of a big tree, the idea came to us: how about a student volunteer organisation that will give young South Africans the opportunity to tangibly contribute to the building of our new democracy?

Christof was a man of the deed and soon after conception the idea had to be tested and popularised. The Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, of which Christof was the deputy director, soon hosted a conference on the prospects of a student volunteer initiative. I travelled to Pretoria in the company of the writer and poet Rashaka Ratshitanga, the narrator in the 1985 Mark Newman documentary *The two rivers*. The conference heard from various stakeholders and although it was a time characterised by mistrust and suspicion, the overall spirit was one of hesitant approval. That was enough for Christof and the first project of the Southern African Student Volunteers was to assist with voter education in the run-up to the 1994 elections.

In the period 1994 to 1995 SASVO was mostly for students from the University of Pretoria and the projects involved students going to township schools in the vast areas around Pretoria, offering extra lessons in Mathematics and Physical Science, and also hosting science demonstrations. We agreed that it was time to start planning for the

execution of the original idea. A pilot school renovation project was successfully completed at Makapanstad, Hammanskraal.

The next SASVO 'work camps' (we tried in vain to use a less loaded name) were held in Venda, by now re-incorporated into the Republic of South Africa as the Vhembe District of the Northern Province (soon to become Limpopo), during the April 1996 university holidays. I assisted Danie Brand, by now officially SASVO project coordinator, with project preparation. We selected three sites. The first was a primary school on the main road at the top of my 'Neue Weinsteige'. I happened to know the principal and she was eager to have her classrooms painted and new school gardens established. My student Dokotela Ravele was principal of Thate High School and the second project was to connect the school to a fountain higher up the mountain for running water, and to build the principal his own, separate office. The third project was to glaze and paint the classrooms of a school near Beuster, the seat of the Lutheran Dean, who at the time was an old friend from the SUCA days, Zwo Nevhuthalu. He succeeded the colourful Dr Tshenuwani Farisani who was now a member of the first democratically elected South African Parliament. Zwo agreed that the volunteers could live at Beuster where there was ample accommodation for youth conferences, and we arranged that members of his congregation would cook for the students.

I also invited a number of University of Venda students to join the volunteers, who were still mainly from the University of Pretoria.

The SASVO project officers visited a few weeks before the arrival of the volunteers and we organised meetings with members of the three communities. A key experience for me personally was when I introduced the students to the community meeting at Thate. I spoke about the idea behind SASVO and that it was a historical occasion that this community was chosen as the first to host a student volunteer project. People were listening, looking down, and my enthusiasm found little echo. When the first project officer, Aaron Mogotsi, spoke, the atmosphere changed noticeably, and at the end of the meeting the community were on board. No more white man coming with good intentions to do things for us. 'Building Africa Ourselves' was by now the motto of the Southern African Student Volunteers.

The first three projects were a success. The student volunteers were empowered. They learned skills while having fun. They made friends. They gained confidence. And they felt part of something bigger. Every evening Danie Brand (whose father founded the Development Bank of Southern Africa) met with the team leaders to get progress reports. I was impressed by the leadership skills of the members of this new generation. When I many years later learned the concept 'the leader as convener' from Peter Block, I was reminded of those sessions. But Danie

got a scholarship to do a Masters at Emory University in Atlanta and what would happen after the June-July holiday projects that were now to follow the successful 'pilots'?

I had a sabbatical coming up and the university expected me to register a research project. I was convinced that I would be able to complete the project in less than the available time. This is how it came to pass that I arrived at the Centre for Human Rights on 1 October 1996 as SASVO Project Coordinator – while on sabbatical leave from the University of Venda.

We had less than two months to organise the December-January holiday projects and by now SASVO went national and regional. The recent introduction of email on all campuses made it possible for students to apply from all over. We were amazed – the response was overwhelming. It was clearly an idea for which the time had come. The 'Southern' in the name was real – we received applications, through Christof's African Moot Court Competition contacts, from students in Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique. The team of project officers dealt with the applications – too many for the projects we had available. That was going to be a serious constraint. We developed criteria for what would constitute a viable project. Community involvement was one and established local leadership to partner with. It was a great advantage if there was local sponsorship, too, apart from a safe place for students to live.

Entered Norah Tager and her PEACE Foundation. I think she called us and we had a meeting. We immediately hit it off. That 'can do' attitude, the 'when do we start?' Norah had a great network of live wires in remote rural communities. I will never forget people like Mr Paulus Mdluli, school principal in Kosi Bay. SASVO eventually built a computer lab at his school. That is how it happened that teams of student volunteers departed in early December 1996 and again in January and April 1997 for Ndumo, Nkandla, Manguzi, Keiskammahoek, Mphahlele, Unarine, Mukhumbani, Mankweng and even the Makhathini Plains. Other partnerships led to teams assisting with the building of houses in Alexandra in Gauteng and in Tanzania with Habitat for Humanity. There was also the establishment of an aquaponic food garden in Botswana and the building of a classroom for the Unidade II Secondary School near Maputo.

The latter project was close to my heart as it involved more than just the construction of the classroom. The Venda connection made possible the accompaniment of the team by the German sculptor Traugott Fobbe. He grew up at Georgenholz, the last Lutheran mission in Venda served by a German missionary. He was in Grade 11 when his parents' South African visas were revoked. Back in Germany, Traugott became an artist and teacher, specialising in participative artistic expression.

Having recently returned to South Africa, he went along on the Maputo trip and he taught welding skills to the learners at the school. They produced an impressive work from scrap metal (that was the idea but they could not find any in Maputo, so we had to buy steel for the project) expressing the aspirations of the Mozambican youth. The team brought the sculpture back with them and it had pride place in the Law Faculty. It ended up being stolen – possibly for scrap metal – but the memory of that successful project reminds me of what SASVO was all about in those heady first years.

Funding soon became a headache. It was a great relief when the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) appointed the SASVO project officers as United Nations Volunteers. The stipends volunteers received was not big but comparable to what a student assistant would receive at the University. A few South African and international foundations also made seed funding available. I remember the thousands of funding proposals we wrote and the few letters of gratitude. One evening we were working late again. A section of the Law Faculty library was allocated to me by way of an office. I was writing letters to funders and would take them in piles to Christof who would read them before signing them. He was somewhat of a control freak in such matters.

I was really fed up when we received a snotty negative response from one of South Africa's premier foundations – 'Thank you for your proposal but we do not fund jamborees ...' or something like that. I then wrote back, telling the chairman of the fund exactly what he could do with his money. He should do it carefully, we do not want any injuries, but do it all the same. The letter was in the pile on Christof's desk. An hour or so later I heard laughter coming down the corridor. Christof could not stop laughing. We had our moments of comic relief.

It was becoming clear that the physical work that the volunteers did during the classroom and clinic building and renovation projects would not remain viable for long. We did involve trained tradespeople in the projects – as consultants and trainers of the students. But with high levels of unemployment in the areas where we were working, it was a matter of time before SASVO would be accused of taking away people's work opportunities. And, although the students loved the experience of actually erecting something tangible in two to three weeks, it was probably also not the optimum use of the talents of the leaders of tomorrow. Would it be possible to still do something practical that simultaneously involve more of the mind?

We were approached by the Gauteng Department of Education and the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund about a possible project in Gauteng schools during the 1997 Winter holidays. There were several planning meetings and eventually the idea of *Operation Zenzele* was born. Three schools per Gauteng education district were selected and 10 student

volunteers would spend 10 days at each school. They would work with learners to do basic renovation and gardening in the mornings, and in the afternoons they would teach various activities. A competition was planned and the winning teams in the various categories were to present their work on the final day to the MEC and other officials.

We submitted a funding proposal to the European Commission of Human Rights that would allow us to train the student volunteers for a week at the University of Pretoria before they embarked on the projects.

Let me not dwell on the funding challenges. Suffice to say that on the designated date hundreds of students arrived from all over South Africa and other SADC countries. They were housed in UP student residences and the training was delivered on campus. At least 2 members per team of 10 were trained in each of the following specialisations: Street Law, HIV/AIDS Awareness, Boalian Community Theatre, and Mural Painting (with a Human Rights theme).

My sabbatical and therefore my time at SASVO was coming to an end and the training workshops were the final part of my responsibility. Danie returned from Atlanta and I was handing over to him. And Christof and I managed to persuade Prince Mbetse to join the team of project officers in view of a possible future leadership role.

I knew Prince from the University of Venda where he was SRC President during the transition. He was a powerful leader. When the first University Council after liberation wavered on a matter of principle, Prince just told them that they were not legitimate and should resign. And they did. After completing a first Law degree at UNIVEN, Prince moved to UP for his LLB. A new Vice-Chancellor was appointed in 1996 and within a short period of his arrival on campus Prince and comrades staged a sit-in in the new VC's office. Christof had a great affinity with Prince and his sense of humour. He had a way of telling stories that would entertain us to no end. Prince was eventually persuaded that SASVO was a worthwhile initiative for his considerable powers.

On Friday 27 June 1997 the freshly trained student volunteers gathered in the large auditorium of the then Education and Law building for the send-off ceremony. In the parking lot outside were the buses – diesel engines already idling. Representatives from funders and partners were on the list of speakers. Christof was visibly moved when he spoke. Prince was the MC. When all was said and done, he closed the proceedings with these words: 'Comrades, we are returning to the very schools that we used to burn, this time to build!' Cheering students boarded the buses that would take them to the schools where they over the next ten days were to create magic.

I was already back in Venda when the then MEC, Mary Metcalfe, toured the projects on the final day to appreciate the winning murals and watch the plays that the learners staged under the direction of the

students. Christof went along and called me to say how sorry he was that I could not be part of the celebrations. Sometime in 1998 I received a call from one of the district officials. She said it was unbelievable – the three schools per district that hosted the student volunteers all showed a marked increase in matric results at the end of 1997. There was just something really uplifting about the energy and mindset of the SASVO students.

The period of my involvement with SASVO coincided with the establishment and first hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The atrocities that were revealed and the subsequent mood was in stark contrast to the future-commitment of the student volunteers. Christof submitted a proposal in the wake of the TRC that SASVO should be made an official and permanent institution of restitution. Maybe the jamboree-guy was on the panel, but the proposal was not successful.

Two decades later, when #RhodesMustFall animated students, I could not help wondering what would have been different if SASVO survived. SASVO is connected to #FeesMustFall. When President Zuma announced in December 2017 that there was going to be free tertiary education for students from households with a combined annual income of below R350,000, he in essence ratified the proposal of Mukovhe Morris Masutha, now holding a PhD from Bath University in the UK. Mukovhe grew up in a village not far from where the SASVO volunteers of the three Venda pilot projects stayed in April 1996. Some years later he was a high school learner when another SASVO project team came to his area and his talents were spotted by one of the volunteers, today a medical doctor and still a good friend. She asked him what he was going to study as he was clearly intelligent. That was the first time ever that anybody spoke to him in such terms. Long story short, in 2010 he was SRC president of the University of the Witwatersrand and also the founder of a bursary programme for rural youth called Thusanani – Help Each Other. And, for the record, he is not really President Zuma's son-in-law. He did date a Zuma daughter but that was long ago. The press got that one wrong – deliberately or not we won't know.

We often spoke about 'reviving SASVO'. The idea was that we might be able to give such a project time and energy after retirement. Until then Christof felt that the School Moot Competition served a similar purpose. I found my own ways of being involved with student development.

What would a revived SASVO look like?

A week or so before the July 2021 looting and civil unrest Clem Sunter published his latest scenario book. As was the case with 9/11, the book reads like a feat of a latter-day Siener van Rensburg. He said South Africa only has two possible futures – the low road of increased

anarchy, looting and the deterioration of institutions, or the high road of creating a people's economy. For the latter an entrepreneurial revolution was a condition.

Sometime after becoming aware of Sunter's latest scenarios, I attended the 2021 Universities South Africa (USAf) Conference online. The sessions of the World of Work group were particularly interesting. In one of these I learned that several universities, like my old employer, the University of Venda, were explicitly referring to themselves as entrepreneurial institutions – 'not having but being an incubator'.

An entrepreneur in Afrikaans is someone with 'ondernemingsgees', someone having an enterprising spirit or disposition or mindset. Someone like Christof. Like the student volunteers of the 1990s.

How about we train teams of volunteer students in the fundamentals of being enterprising, enhance their critical thinking and creativity, their communication skills, ability to collaborate and commitment to add value and let them loose on schools and communities during the university holidays? What better way to rekindle the hope of unemployed graduates and other youth that linger in the streets of their townships and villages and through them the hope we all had in the 1990s of starting something new?

### *Prince Mbetse: recollections of a SASVO Project Manager*

I joined SASVO in early 1997 as one of six UNDP sponsored project managers. Professor Christof Heyns had convinced the UN body that the SASVO project was within its own broader developmental goals. As project managers our job was to identify neglected and dilapidated school infrastructure around the country's nine provinces, with a view of improving their physical condition. These schools were mostly located in rural South Africa. However, Christof Heyns never looked at South Africa in isolation from the rest of the continent. Therefore, he insisted that the school renovation projects be inclusive of schools and students from countries in the broader SADC region. I use the term 'renovation' in its most basic sense within the context of what a group of unskilled teams of students could achieve in a three-to-four-week school holiday period and almost always under severely restrictive budgets.

Professor Heyns did not look at SASVO as a perfect model for schools' physical infrastructure upgrade and he understood the obvious shortcomings. Instead, he conceptualized it as part of a broader social transformation agenda that would condition the minds of participating students to be socially responsive citizens alive to the realities of their communities and to engender the spirit of voluntarism within

themselves and the communities in which they operated. To this end, it was always a prerequisite for a qualifying school that the surrounding community be a part of the project and that they work hand in hand with the visiting students. Hence the slogan 'Building Africa Ourselves'.

Since Professor Heyns was a teacher first and foremost, SASVO was an extension of the classroom and not just a lesson in selfless community service. This project was also a platform that facilitated interaction between students from different backgrounds and different countries in a manner that could never be achieved in a classroom setting. Speaking for myself, it was through SASVO that I better understood the richness of the continent's diverse cultures and how its peoples viewed themselves. This came from long hours of intellectual engagements with students from universities located in the different African countries. In most instances, I found the experiences to be quite humbling to me as a South African who before then had never set foot outside the borders of the former 'Transvaal' and who had always seen Africa through the lens of what the global media had projected Africa to be. Such media-induced perspective had given me a false sense of intellectual superiority which was thoroughly modified by these interactions with other students from countries such as Mozambique, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda. It is my view therefore that those of us who were privileged enough to be a part of Christof's SASVO dream, eventually understood and shared in his fiercely pan-African world view.

Moreover, it could be argued that for secondary school learners who were living in far flung rural corners of the country, meeting and mingling with real life university students served as a source of inspiration which gave them hope that tertiary education was within reach. I know for sure that this is what it could have done for me. To see students from universities and what was then known as Technikons, most of them being as 'ordinary' as they themselves were, sort of demystified tertiary education and gave them a reason to believe it was possible. It helped a lot that Professor Heyns himself sometimes took time off his many engagements to visit the project sites and to interact with the local communities.

It is also my belief that the act of physically transforming the cosmetic looks of a school had a direct bearing on the learners' future perspective on what it meant to take ownership of their own circumstances. It is hard to imagine that learners who had spent days fixing their classrooms by replacing broken windows, mending cracks on the walls, repairing leaking roofs and applying fresh paint to walls and window frames could still participate in any vandalization of the same school infrastructure. Learners were left with a strong sense of pride in their own schools and had a fresh perspective that was more

about protecting and caring for their facilities as opposed to destroying them.

There was a school in Limpopo, near the area called Dendron, which I identified as one of those which were to be renovated. This school stands out in my mind as the most neglected that I had ever come across, which says a lot coming from someone who spent his primary school days learning under trees. At this school, there was not a single window that was intact, or a door that worked, or a roof that did not leak. I remember finding a stinking decomposed carcass of a long dead goat in one of the classrooms that nobody had bothered to remove. This same school also had the distinction of having been one of those which had achieved a zero matric pass rate the previous year. Together with the school's own learners and the local community, SASVO helped transform the school's facilities, leaving it more like a school than an abandoned single men's hostel. And in that very year, the school achieved some of their best matric results ever. A coincidence? Maybe. But for Professor Heyns and his SASVO team, this was a feel-good story that encouraged us to do even more. To him and to us, SASVO's activities were giving a practical meaning to the constitutionally guaranteed right to education.

When one looks at SASVO from the perspective of its founder, Christof Heyns, one realizes that he was a teacher through and through. He was an exceptional one who didn't just believe in disseminating legal theories in lecture halls, but one who strongly believed in teaching through doing and practical experiences that had real and tangible outcomes.

The eventual financially induced closure of the SASVO project was one of those things that Professor Heyns lamented for a long time. He was so passionate about SASVO that there was no doubt in my mind that if he had the means to do so himself, he would have funded the project from his own pocket, something which he had actually done on several occasions. Right to the end, whenever he and I met, he was still flirting with the idea of reviving SASVO, and even though he always said it jokingly, I wondered if he did not really mean it. SASVO, more than any of his numerous initiatives, exposed Professor Heyns' profound understanding of youth psychology. It was his understanding of the youth's endless desire for adventure, their yearning for something more than just sitting in a classroom and taking notes, that gave him the idea to channel this interest towards something the impact of which I still feel today, more than two decades after.

*Danie Brand: the spirit of SASVO*

I started my first fulltime job in January 1994 at the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria. I was appointed as a project coordinator, in part to work with Christof and others (Aaron Mogotsi, Lucas Maphosa, Jabu Maphalala, Mpho Matjila, Sello Ndlovu, Jacob van Garderen, Jan Bezuidenhout, Murray Hofmeyr, Prince Mbetse, Belinda Mogashwa, Derek Xaba, Nozipho Mbanjwa, Dikeledi Mathebula, Wendolene Bosoga) on the Southern African Student Volunteers – SASVO. I did so for the next year and a half, until September 1996, when I left for postgraduate study abroad. I again worked at the Centre and with SASVO from September 1997 until the end of 1998, when I got a teaching job at the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria.

In 2018 – twenty years after I left SASVO – I moved from the University of Pretoria to work at the Free State Centre for Human Rights at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. Three years later, it was here that the devastating news of Christof's death reached me.

When I first sat down to write this short piece on my involvement with SASVO to honour Christof's legacy, I did a Google search on SASVO to refresh my memory on facts and figures. The only return on my search was a newspaper opinion piece Christof wrote in March 2008, reacting to the events that unfolded at the University of the Free State after the notorious incident at the Reitz male student residence at the UFS. A group of white male students subjected a group of older black women workers to a degrading, racialized and sexualized 'initiation' practice. The incident, which was made public by one of the students posting a video of it on the internet, caused tremendous public outcry and set in motion a process of deep transformation of the University of the Free State that is still ongoing.

Christof ascribed the students' conduct to 'a kind of hopelessness ... that results in criminal behaviour' that according to him was prevalent in our society at the time. He asked 'how ... people who have to work out their futures in this country [can] escape from that hopelessness?' He provided (true to form) three answers: that one should strive to make yourself useful rather than complain about your predicament; that your skin should not be too thin (you should expect to be affected by the enormous changes that were (are) occurring in our society in ways that don't always seem fair); and you should try your very best to retain the hope that things could be different and perhaps even better. And then the kicker. In answer to the question what he was going to do himself to combat the feeling of hopelessness, Christof said the following: 'I'm going to revive SASVO. To get this bad taste out of my mouth. To revive

my hope that, despite everything, we can make something special of this country. To take it further and adapt a tradition in which the ideas of 'help one another' and 'let's make a plan' apply'.

The article took my breath away. Not only because it so viscerally reminded me of my time with SASVO 20 odd years ago and of the unique blend of enthusiasm, optimism, realism and practicality in the face of adversity that so characterised Christof; or that despite Christof's and others' best efforts, SASVO was eventually not revived. It did so because the place where I now work – the Free State Centre for Human Rights – is the University of the Free State's response to the Reitz residence incident and the feeling of hopelessness that engulfed us all afterward that Christof was writing about. It was established in cooperation with the South African Human Rights Commission, as an institution to work toward the transformation of the UFS campus, through human rights, to work through and hopefully disperse the legacy of the Reitz incident. I felt (feel) like I had come full circle, that it showed how one's past remains with you in unexpected and counterintuitive ways, but in the best possible way. It reaffirmed that, after all these years what I learnt working with SASVO (to try to be useful, despite setbacks and the overwhelming enormity of what needs to be done, and in this way to create and maintain hope, to broaden horizons and think new worlds) was still with me at a time when hopelessness again lurks.

To the sceptics, Christof's idea of SASVO embodying this spirit was, at least for me, proven to be true.

SASVO indeed did give the opportunity to me and many others (at the end of the 12 years of SASVO's existence, more than 9000 students) when we were crying out for something concrete to do to deal with what was (still is) happening in our country and region, to do something (small but) useful. It showed me and many others that we could do many things that we didn't know we could: we (students from all different disciplines and backgrounds) helped paint schools in Hammanskraal; fixed windows, water pipes and toilets in Venda; planted vegetable gardens and worked on bridges and roads in Limpopo.

Our worlds were indeed made larger, our horizons broadened. Through SASVO I saw places and met people that I would never have had contact with otherwise, some of whom have remained friends and collaborators for the rest of my life (I also met Nelson Mandela, Nadine Gordimer and, of all people, American actor Danny Glover!).

All of this happened despite numerous setbacks: funding problems, resistance and sometimes suspicion from some of the communities with whom we worked, motor car accidents, (huge) planning mishaps, and much else. We learnt to continue nonetheless.

In the process, we did in fact learn that hope can be created or revived, and then maintained by each of us, together doing just their bit; that we can create hope by acting.

Although there were many others who worked to create and then build and maintain SASVO, it was Christof, more than anyone else that saw in SASVO and then fostered this spirit of creating hope through doing small things that, to my surprise I learnt is today still with me (and, I am sure with many others). For this – and many other things – I will always remain indebted to Christof Heyns.

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