

The Children's Hospital Trust needs continuous support

The Children's Hospital Trust, which has been running for 21 years, fundraises for the advancement of child healthcare through the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town.



The Hospital sees over 260,000 patient visits each year from in and around South Africa, the majority of whom are from exceptionally poor and marginalised communities. One third of the little patients are younger than a year.

"To survive over two decades as a charity is no mean feat, but as the Trust's mandate grew, so did the size and expertise of their team," explains CEO of the Children's Hospital Trust, Louise Driver.

"With a strong communications team, a supportive financial and project management team and an efficient fundraising team, the Trust has grown from strength to strength. We have very strict protocols and procedures which allow for effective donor reporting and accountability."

Long-term survival

However, it is long-term support by those with generous hearts that ensure the survival, sustainability and growth of organisations such as the Trust. Ten years ago the Trust received a large bequest from which they were able to establish an endowment fund, the interest on which covers all of their operational costs. This means that 100% of all donations go directly to the hospital or priority child healthcare programmes and not a single cent is spent on operational expenses.

John Bester, a trustee for the Children's Hospital Trust, says that it is incredibly important for people to make donations to NPOs and NGOs in order for society to continue to support the impoverished.

"They are giving something back to the community and it can be any person who is able to afford to make a donation no matter what size. Many organisations will have a give-as-you-earn type programme where each month, a small amount is deducted from the salary and made payable across to the charity. This allows for the NPOs and NGOs to invest in projects such as the Trust has done," Bester says.

Bequest programme

Apart from give-as-you-earn, charities that offer a bequest programme also allows for individuals to give in other ways. The Trust started its bequest programme six years ago, which has added to its sustainability by allowing individuals to leave a bequest in their Will, which means that they can leave a legacy long after they are gone.

"NPOs survive by having diversified sources of funding - many different donors from varied donor markets including corporates, trust and foundations, individuals and the mass public. What is very important, however, is to try and get operational costs funded either through endowment or through effectively including their operational costs in their project proposal budgets," Driver says.

Bester explains that the Trust has been particularly successful in this area because of the brand they have created over the years and the fact that they are supporting the only children's hospital south of the Sahara, which serves children from across the country and the continent. However, it's the continuous support by donors that ensures that the Trust can carry out its work.

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