

Small donations can make a huge difference

Although generosity and giving in South Africa might not always be 'formal philanthropy', a 2005 study showed that 93% of South African respondents give either their time, money or in-kind contributions. If charity begins at home, then South Africans are giving enormous and incredibly generous amounts.



Kate Crane Briggs, founding director of Culture Connect SA and fundraising consultant, explains that in South Africa giving is not always formal in the sense of donating large sums to charities as there is a strong sense of community giving and Ubuntu. Ubuntu refers to the essential human virtues: compassion and humanity.

"South Africa has a very mixed landscape. We are a nation of givers, but a lot of this is informal - helping to pay your gardener's children's school fees or donating a Santa Shoebox. What is notable, however, is that low income South Africans don't have much compared to the very wealthy, but proportionally they give much more," she says.

Tapping into the spirit of Ubuntu and the ability for a lot of people to give just a little bit, is where philanthropy can truly grow. Small, individual amounts that are given regularly can truly make a huge difference.

Monthly contributions

"At the Children's Hospital Trust, we see the value in individual givers contributing each month, even if it's as little as R20 a month, which makes a huge difference to projects and programmes at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital," explains the head of the Guardians Programme at the Children's Hospital Trust, Ronell Jordaan.

Guardians are classified as individuals who donate R5,000 or more a year to collectively fund a priority project. The Children's Hospital Trust is committed to advancing child healthcare through the Red Cross Children's Hospital, which sees over 260,000 patient visits a year from all over South Africa as well as other African countries.

Studies show that over 86% of guardians who donate monthly to the Children's Hospital Trust have chosen to contribute because they know that their donation contributes to a collective donation with a larger impact on a given project or programme. And they aren't wrong. When a brand new Medical Imaging Department opened at the Red Cross Children's Hospital in August 2015, individual givers collectively contributed over R2.2m towards the project.

"Being able to combine individual, regular donations into a significant contribution shows the power of collective giving. This is incredibly rewarding for those givers because they get to witness their impact first hand," says Jordaan.

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