

Woza Moya School Support Programme

In response to the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS in the Ufafa Valley, KwaZulu-Natal, the Woza Moya Project was established in April 2000 by a small group of people associated with the Buddhist Retreat Centre at Ixopo and the local community. Situated on tribal land among the people it serves, the Woza Moya Project is a community-based project based in an area where the literacy rate is very low, unemployment is estimated to be over 80% and the community is seriously affected by the HIV/Aids, poverty and a lack of educational resources.



Woza Moya provides services in the following areas:

- ✘ Sponsorship and support for orphans and vulnerable children
- ✘ Support for guardians or foster parents (usually 'gogos')
- ✘ Home based care for vulnerable households, including distribution of basic medicines
- ✘ HIV and AIDS information and counselling
- ✘ Food security and income generation programmes
- ✘ Paralegal and advocacy services

The School Support Programme



Woza Moya helps the many children in the community who are left bereaved by HIV and AIDS. We aim to do this while keeping the children within their community – rather than institutionalizing them in orphanages - so that they can maintain their sense of belonging and cultural identity. An essential part of Woza Moya's support for vulnerable children is ensuring they attend and stay in school. More than anything it is school attendance that keeps vulnerable children within the fabric of the community.

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), even in foster care, tend to be the most impoverished. Often they are severely stigmatised because they are not dressed in the correct uniform or don't have shoes. We have even found cases where children are barred from entering school, or have had their school reports withheld.

As part of our intervention, Woza Moya focuses on helping vulnerable primary school children (up to grade 6) to integrate into the school community. We help those who are already in school as well as those who are not yet attending school. We have been running the School Support Programme for nearly five years now, and the impact has been overwhelming: both our staff and the schools report that children's self-esteem improves enormously when they have new uniform, they achieve better grades, they integrate better into school life and there is a marked improvement in attendance. We monitor their progress closely with school teachers and principals, Community Care Workers and through our own Child & Youth Care Coordinator, and the impact of this programme has been extremely positive.

How does the School Support Programme work?



With R1000 a year, Woza Moya can purchase the school uniform for one child, including shoes, socks, underwear, tie, shirt, and trousers or skirt and cover some of the operational costs involved in running this programme. The school support programme only accepts primary school children up to grade 6. There are 7 primary schools in the Ufafa valley and we work with all of them (and each one has a different school uniform!).

If I give R1000, what information will I receive about the child?

You will receive a handwritten thank-you letter and an email with the name of the child, a recent photo and a short history of the child's circumstances.

How are children selected for inclusion in this programme?

A key role is played by Woza Moya's Community Care Workers (CCWs). We have 35 CCWs and one of their tasks is to collect information on orphans and vulnerable children in their area and refer them to our Child and Youth Care Coordinator, who follows up with both the family and the school. We select the most vulnerable, but there is a long waiting list of children who need sponsors.

Can I make contact with the child that I sponsor?

Unfortunately logistics and time prevent us from offering to accompany sponsors to visit the children; however we actively encourage sponsors to attend the Woza Moya annual Christmas party in December. This is a perfect occasion to meet the children and see them in the community with their families and friends. You are welcome to bring or send Christmas presents for the children.

Will I receive copies of school reports or other news about the child's progress?

Again, we are not able to offer this, as we currently have more than 350 children in the programme and we do not have the resources to collect and send school reports or other information about the progress of the children. However they are closely

supervised and monitored by the CCWs and our Child and Youth Care Coordinator and support is offered by our team if any kind of problem is detected.

How soon will the children that I sponsor benefit from my donation?

We buy school uniforms 5 times a year, and you can contribute at any time during the year. The child will receive his/her uniform no more than 10 weeks after Woza Moya receives the donation. The reason for this is that it is more cost effective to buy in bulk, and it is also less labour intensive than buying one uniform each time a donation comes in.

Can I keep sponsoring the same child year after year?

In fact this is not possible, for various reasons. Each year we re-evaluate which children should be in the programme, according to their circumstances. Children's situations change often, and sometimes they will leave this programme for a year and join another of Woza Moya's support programmes for orphans and vulnerable children. If you donate a second year running, you will be sponsoring a different child and will receive the new child's name, photo and history. This may seem strange, but administratively it becomes extremely complex to manage continued sponsorship of the same child and we have to keep the system as simple as possible. However all your contributions are hugely appreciated by the children and they benefit enormously from this help.

Who can I contact for more information?

Our Special Projects Volunteer, Ian Chamblor, via email at office@wozamoya.org.za (please put School Support Programme in the subject box).

If I want to contribute more than R1000 what will my donation be used for?



Woza Moya can cover the basic costs of this school support programme with R1000, but additional funding would be used for extra school accessories such as stationary, a school satchel, the salary of our seamstress, who makes many of the school uniforms, much-needed fuel for our sturdy bakkies (pick-up trucks) and general running costs of Woza Moya's Community Centre. All donations are gratefully received and a hand-written thank-you letter will be written to each person for their donation,

however small.

Woza Moya
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www.wozamoya.org.za