

Corporate Responsibility

Transnet-Phelophepa Healthcare Train

Overview

Transnet-Phelophepa is a healthcare clinic on wheels that travels into areas of rural South Africa where there is just one doctor for every 5,000 patients. Literally translated, 'Phelophepa' means 'good, clean health' and this encapsulates the essence of what the train aims to achieve. Roche is the main external sponsor of Phelophepa, having provided support since its first journey in 1994. In 2012 a second train, Phelophepa II, was launched to bring this vital service to an even greater number of people.

How does Phelophepa work?

Phelophepa is owned and operated by Transnet Limited – South Africa's biggest state-owned freight transportation and logistics company. Each train comprises 18 coaches providing facilities to conduct general health, dental and eye checks in rural communities, and dispense treatments for diagnosed conditions. In addition to these general health services, individual counselling sessions and group workshops to help people cope with psychological issues such as stress and depression are offered. The trains also house a special coach where education on general health issues including nutrition, hygiene and dental health can be provided to members of the local communities which the trains visit. Each train travels for 36 weeks of each year, visiting one rural community a week. Rural communities make requests to the Transnet Foundation throughout the year to consider specific stops.

Phelophepa II, the second mobile healthcare clinic for the service, was launched in 2012 to

bring healthcare to an even greater number of patients each year. Combined with the first train, Phelophepa II effectively doubles the capacity of the service, which can now reach over 375,000 people per year, treat over 90,000 patients and issue over 68,000 prescriptions to those in need. The new train is also equipped with specialised wheel chair accessibility and enhanced technology to bring the best possible service to patients.

Roche was the first company to become financially involved with the Phelophepa train and has since remained a key sponsor and supporter through a public-private partnership with Transnet. Roche now has full responsibility for the continuing operation of the Primary Healthcare Clinic coach on both trains, which include a Diabetes Care Programme and Oncology Unit, a medicine dispensary, School Health Services and education programmes for health workers and staff.



Key facts and figures

Phelophepa and Phelophepa II...

- have 18 coaches each, and combined are over 780 metres in length and 1,350 tonnes in weight
- travel through up to 70 communities annually
- are each operated by around 20 resident staff and supported by up to 40 South African student volunteers
- helped train over 20,000 student doctors and nurses since the service's first journey in 1994
- made over 25,000 school visits to date, delivering vital health checks, medicines and education to children
- see over 375,000 people a year, issuing over 68,000 prescriptions
- have benefitted over 5.8 million people through general health screening, HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives, health education and counselling outreach services

“Roche came on board with gusto, with passion, and with a commitment to say ‘what can we do to help?’ It’s not often that you get such a sponsor. We don’t always want to go to them and ask for money – we very often go to them and ask for advice... The relationship between Roche and Transnet is probably one of the best examples of a sustainable public-private partnership that I can think of.”

Dr Lynette Coetzee, Transnet Foundation’s Senior Manager for Health

Background

In rural communities in resource-limited countries where there is usually a very poor doctor to patient ratio, people have to travel long distances to receive even basic healthcare provision. The Phelophepa trains aim to address this challenge by travelling to remote communities to bring healthcare services directly to the patients.

Roche’s long-standing commitment to Phelophepa reflects the company’s approach to finding solutions to health challenges in developing countries – whereby we seek to form public-private partnerships and combine our skills and resources with those of other organisations to deliver sustainable outputs that could not have been achieved alone. The launch of Phelophepa II in 2012 demonstrates our continued support for the valuable service and will help make a positive impact on the lives of thousands of people every year.



Results

The result of the broad reach of the two Phelophepa trains is a better awareness of common health issues within these remote and often poorly educated communities, meaning that there is an increased likelihood of people presenting for examination and consequently more chance that patients can receive appropriate treatment. Ultimately the outcomes of Phelophepa are driven by the focus on ‘good, clean health’. Health inspires productivity, productivity generates growth and growth inspires prosperity.



Communities are able to benefit from Phelophepa and the Roche Health Clinic through blood tests, eye tests and general health checks

Published by

F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd
Corporate Donations
and Philanthropy
4070 Basel, Switzerland

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