

MEC Dhlomo's Mandela Day plea : buy some bricks and help build KZN Children's hospital

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Kwazulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has pleaded with South Africans and philanthropists at large to dig into their pockets and help fund construction of the KZN Children's Hospital.

Established in 1931, the facility was the first dedicated children's hospital in Africa. It is currently a referral hospital for children with physical and mental disabilities, and takes them from birth up to the age of 18. However, some of its buildings are in a state of disrepair and need urgent revamping.

According to Dr Arthi Ramkissoo of the KZN Children Hospital Trust, a sum of R240 million is required for the construction of a six-storey building for this purpose.

In a bid to achieve this, the Trust needs at least 1 million bricks, and is urging Good Samaritans to help it buy them by donating R100 for each brick.

During a visit to the hospital, where he got involved in cleaning and painting activities at the facility, as part of the commemoration of International Nelson Mandela Day today, MEC Dhlomo bought 50 bricks to the tune of R5000

Urging others to follow suit, he said: *"Because of the love that Madiba had for children, we are sure that he would have loved for this project to materialise. This hospital was built in 1931 and dedicated to white children. When some of our doctors and nurses opened it up to Black people, the apartheid government stopped funding it and it fell into a state of disrepair. In 2011, when some people approached me, I put it on the programme of the Department. We are not contributing alone as a Department. We are opening it up to all other philanthropists... South Africans who love children and to internationalists, to make a contribution towards a six storey tower that we want to build. We are told by architects and the construction people that we need a million bricks. There's no contribution big or small that cannot assist us. This morning, a pensioner bought two bricks, which we really welcome and appreciate. We'd like them to support us so that we can realise the dream of our father, Dr Nelson Mandela, to take care of the health needs of children through this hospital. Here, we'll have all the specialists. Children will still be treated at all our hospitals, but this will be a centre of excellence."*

Dr Ramkissoo echoed the MEC's sentiments, and urged South Africans to come to the party and help fund the project, saying that it will make a big difference in improving access to – and the quality of – healthcare services to children.

Once complete, the facility will have rehabilitation facilities for children, a swimming pool, full occupational physiotherapy gyms, acute rehabilitation wards, a growth and nutrition centre and a radiology theatre.

"Once we have that up and running it will help the rest of the complex to function properly. We want this to be up and running as quickly as possible. If we had the money, we would press the button and be up and running in 18 months' time. We need about R100 million to press the button. We'll need about R240 million and we've raised quite a bit of money... So, if we are able to sell a million bricks we'll be able to raise the money to start the building and finish it," said Dr Ramkissoo.

Those who wish to make donations towards the building of the hospital may visit [KZN Children's Hospital](#)



MEC Dhlomo

with actor Melusi Yeni



An artist's

impression of the completed KZN Children's Hospital