

UTHANDO PROJECT Inc. - Frequently Asked Questions

Dolls for the Children of KwaZulu-Natal



Could YOU make a doll for a child who has never had one?

If you can sew, knit, or crochet
... we have the patterns. You can be as creative as
you like - all we ask is that your doll be sturdy,
cuddly and colourful, with brown skin.

⌘ Where are the dolls going?

To children living in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where two thirds of children live in poverty, and all have been affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Dolls are distributed mainly through the agency TREE (Training Resources in Early Education): www.tree-ecd.co.za Our training partner is dlalanathi, who work with many communities and their relationships with children at risk through "Play for Communication". Our fundraising is given to dlalanathi for professional Zulu staff psychologists and administration. Dolls are also selected for 4 other organisations and for the Amagugu project of The Africa Centre, which empowers HIV+ mothers to disclose their HIV status to their children...a vital need where AIDS carries such a stigma.

⌘ How are the dolls used?

The dolls will bring delight to the children and their carers, as an invitation to play. Play can facilitate difficult conversations and help the child with grief and loss. To own and play with a doll encourages a child's development in all spheres: physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

⌘ Who makes the dolls?

Anyone! This is a grassroots project. Craft groups, individuals, school children, seniors, church groups ... all want to send something made with their own hands, to show children and families living midst the pandemic that they are not forgotten by the rest of the world.

⌘ How did the project begin?

In 2004, Dr Julie Stone, an Australian infant, child & family psychiatrist, visited South Africa. She witnessed the stark situation and invited people to respond by making dolls. Since then, many have. *Uthando means 'love' in the Zulu language.*

⌘ How many dolls have been sent?

Dolls have arrived in KwaZulu-Natal from all over the world. Over 32,000 dolls have been sent from Australia over eight years, through our Perth address. KZN (population 10 million) has 1.5 million children under the age of 6. Each one would love a doll of their own.

⌘ What else is happening in KZN?

Hundreds of programs work with children and families, at an individual, community and state level. Much of the community work is tackled bravely by volunteers who daily face daunting emotional and logistical problems. Our aim is to support them in their work through Uthando volunteers' visits to KZN to train community leaders and carers in doll-making, so that they can now teach others.

⌘ What are the statistics?

In the part of KZN where our work began, where the AIDS pandemic is most severe, one in five children grieves the loss of one or both parents and up to 60% of young women may be HIV+.

Across South Africa, 14.8% of young women and 4.5% of young men aged 15-24 are living with HIV/AIDS. Over 1000 people die each day from HIV/AIDS in South Africa and 1.4 million children have lost one or both parents.

For more information, patterns, or mailing list registration: Website: www.uthandoproject.org

Co-ordinator: Georgia Efford, 08 9293 2363
georgia1@inet.net.au

School projects: Lynne Tognolini, 08 9293 3876
schools@uthandoproject.org

Book, doll kit sales: fundraising@uthandoproject.org

Post or deliver dolls to Georgia Efford, 2 Healey Place, Gooseberry Hill 6076 (prefer Fridays), or Calico and Ivy, 10 Glyde Street, Mosman Park 6012.

"Touching hearts and bringing play to life"