

## The Rocking Horse Project

Mbabane, SwazilandSwaziland  
Denise Mortlock



Year Founded:

2013

**Organization type:**

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Growth

**Budget:**

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://off356.wix.com/rockinghorseproject>

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### Project Summary

#### Elevator Pitch

**Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.**

Children in Swaziland with life limiting or life threatening conditions - and there are so many in this country which has the highest HIV and TB incidence in the world - are not receiving the palliative care we as caring adults should be providing. Our project aims to fill this gap.

**WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"**

We could make the dying days of children more comfortable and less painful?

#### About Project

**Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

Although so much money is being spent on "cure" for HIV positive children and those with TB and other related cancers, very little is done for the "care" of children who are terminally ill. Doctors ask us to assist with purchasing medication not stocked, with transport to health facilities, with accommodation for children in need of respite or step-down care and with employing caregivers for orphaned children needing end of life care.

**Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!**

Funds for pain and symptom relief, transport to access medication and related therapies (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy in particular), salaries for caregivers of orphaned or vulnerable children needing palliative care, salaries for play coordinators, funding of educational material for terminally ill children who still have the right to live as normal a life as possible, funds for training medical and non-medical staff in palliative care, ensuring the best possible environment and making this conducive for the care of children whether in hospitals, hospices or preferably in their own homesteads, funds for distraction therapies during investigative treatment, bereavement support for the family for as long as is needed.

### Impact: How does it Work

**Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.**

During a visit to a local hospital, we found a little boy in severe pain as a result of terminal cancer. We asked what would make him happy and his whispered reply was the request of a bicycle. This was made known to the local community and within a day a bicycle, helmet and riding gear was donated. When we went to deliver these to Khumbulani, we found that he had been discharged with only Panado syrup for pain relief. We then located his homestead but sadly upon our arrival, were told that he had died an hour before. This inspired us to establish a not for profit organisation to address the needs of terminally ill children who die in pain and sometimes in circumstances that are simply awful and totally undignified.

**Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.**

With an initial donation of \$5 000 from a local bank, we have been able to refurbish 2 units at a local existing hospice that was previously used mainly by adults. These units can house 6 children and their caregivers and are child-friendly and close to medical facilities. To date, eleven children have already been fully accommodated, clothed and treated at this hospice. We care for another 4 children at the drug resistant TB hospital and 4 who come from very poor homes. We have been able to fund HIV resistance tests for children who are failing first and second line ARV therapies. Doctors and social welfare officers have referred brain damaged children in need of multiple therapies provided at hospitals for which their parents cannot afford to pay or even afford the transport to access these services. We have had the joy of seeing hopeless children making incredible progress.

Sustainability

**Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution’s plan to ensure financial sustainability?**

We make our needs known to local businesses and individuals who have been extremely supportive and generous in filling specific requests. Doctors and nurses provide their expertise free of charge in most instances and we ask for discounts on all medications prescribed. Schools have also shared educational material generously and schoolchildren are encouraged to visit inpatients in an effort to instil compassion and create awareness.

**Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?**

The Government of Swaziland is one of only 4 countries in Africa that has a stand-alone palliative care policy. Sadly, there is just insufficient funding available to address the needs as described previously as these do not fall directly within the budget. The Rocking Horse Project seeks to address gaps which are not met by government or other organisations. As far as we are aware, no-one else is addressing this increasing problem which is going to have a negative impact on future generations because of unresolved grief, and anger at a society that could have done better.

Team

**Founding Story**

We use Khumbulani and his bicycle to continuously motivate us to make life better for children with life limiting and life threatening illnesses, as well as their families. We saw the need, we asked the community for help, we received the help, we delivered to Khumbulani what he had requested and although it was too late for him, we now have the courage to improve the lives of other children facing similar challenges. This help not only encourages the child and their family, but also the medical staff who sometimes feel overwhelmed by the limitations of what they can provide. From school children to business leaders, we have seen what can be achieved when people join hands around a dying child.

About You

**Organization:**

The Rocking Horse Project

About You

**First Name**

Denise

**Last Name**

Mortlock

**Twitter URL**

**Facebook URL**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheRockingHorseProject?ref=hl>

**LinkedIn URL**

About Your Organization

**Organization Name**

The Rocking Horse Project

**Organization Country**

**Country where this project is creating social impact**

, H, Mbabane

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Impact

**Full Impact Potential: What are the main spread strategies moving forward? (Please consider geographic spread, policy reform, and independent replication/adoption of the idea or other mechanisms.)**

**Barriers: What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?**

Sustainability

**Partnerships: Tell us about your partnerships.**

Approximately 75 words left (450 characters).

## Closing the Loop

### How does your project primarily ensure that feedback delivers results?

Help funders, governments, and other organizations to listen to and act on feedback.

### Please elaborate on your answer to the above question.

By making the needs of children with life limiting or life threatening conditions known. The death of children is such a sensitive issue that it is easier to overlook rather than address. We can not allow this to happen. Children are dying - and dying badly - and we should be doing all in our power to alleviate this situation for them and their families, particularly siblings. Training in paediatric palliative care is needed for qualified and non-qualified medical health care providers. We need to realize that death is a part of the cycle of life and do what we can to reduce fear and stigma.

### Languages: In what languages are you able to read and write fluently?

English.

## 2nd Round Questions

### Thinking about your feedback loop; what information are you trying to get from whom, to whom, and to bring about what change?

#### What is the purpose of your feedback loop?

#### If other, please specify

What mediums or mechanisms do you use to collect feedback? (check all that apply)

#### If other, please specify

Could you briefly describe the way you collect the feedback?

What mechanisms are in place to protect people from retribution?

#### If other, please specify

What are the immediate benefits or incentives for people to provide feedback?

#### If other, please specify

How do you ensure new and marginalized voices are heard?

#### If other, please specify

What are the incentives for the intended recipient to act on the feedback?

#### If other, please specify

How does the feedback mechanism close the loop with those who provided feedback in the first place?

#### If other, please specify

How is feedback published/transparent?

#### If other, please specify

Give two concrete examples of how feedback loops have brought a program or policy more in line with citizens' desires.

If there was one thing you could change to increase the impact of your feedback loop, what would it be?

What are your biggest challenges or barriers in "closing the feedback loop"?

#### If other, please specify

Are you aware of [The Feedback Store](#)?

What are the main uses you can envision for the [Feedback Store](#)?

What is the one thing you would most like to see changed to improve the competition process?

What are you doing to make sure that feedback providers know that they are empowered by the information they can give and that they know exactly what the information they are providing?

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/cerraelciclo/entries/rocking-horse-project>