

# **Transnet-Phelophepa Healthcare Train** *Bringing hope to those who need it most*



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# Foreword

**Roche is proud to be the main external sponsor of Transet-Phelophepa, having supported the train since its first journey in 1994.**

The extensive reach of the programme – bringing general healthcare and other services to rural communities - and the huge and lasting difference that it can make to the lives of people it visits are the reasons that we have evolved our support over a number of years and will continue to do so in the years to come. Today we are proud to think of ourselves not just as supporters, but as partners of Phelophepa and the inspiring team which makes the train's amazing journeys possible.

Our long-standing commitment to Phelophepa reflects our overall 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 outcomes which exceed what we could achieve alone. Our approach to forming partnerships such as Phelophepa with Transnet, South Africa's largest state-owned freight transportation and logistics company, is based on our belief that, although medicines and diagnostics are the cornerstone of our business, they are just one part of the solution to improving healthcare for those people in greatest need.

From the initial support we provided in 1994, through to the development of the Roche Health Clinic in 2001 and its full refurbishment in 2010, our commitment to Phelophepa has grown and strengthened over the many years that we have been involved. We are extremely proud to support the development of a second train, due to be launched in the spring of 2012. The new train will extend the reach of Phelophepa even further by enabling both routes to be covered each year, enabling even more South Africans to access the essential services. This is a truly exciting programme and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners to continue to make a difference.

SEVERIN SCHWAN, CEO



# Phelophepa – South Africa’s train of hope

In the rural communities of countries with limited resources, healthcare clinics are often scarce. Many people have to travel huge distances to access even the most basic healthcare for themselves and their families and as a result, miss out on vital care.

Phelophepa - which translated means ‘good, clean health’ - is a unique mobile healthcare clinic which utilises the existing rail network, travelling to remote communities in South Africa where there is often only a single doctor for up to 5,000 people. The train comprises 18 coaches providing facilities to conduct general health, dental and eye checks and to dispense medicines for diagnosed conditions. In addition to these essential health services, individual counselling sessions and group workshops to help people to cope with psychological issues (such as stress and depression) are offered.

The train also houses 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 train visits.

## Phelophepa’s journey from vision to reality

Phelophepa is owned and operated by Transnet Limited – South Africa’s biggest state-owned freight transportation and logistics company. It started life in 1993 with three refurbished and equipped railway coaches. The ‘Eye Train’, funded and co-managed by Transnet and pioneered by Professor Jannie Ferreira of the Optometry Department at the University of Johannesburg, provided eye care to the rural communities of South Africa. However, it soon became clear that there was a dire need for a more comprehensive healthcare solution for the remote South African communities and from this need, Phelophepa was born.

One Transnet employee, Lynette Coetzee, has worked tirelessly to make the vision of the train a reality, by getting Phelophepa on the rails in 1994. Since then, under her careful watch, it has grown from three coaches to 18, significantly increasing the range of services that it can offer to patients. Ultimately for Lynette and the team behind the train, Phelophepa is about improving not just the health of the individuals but the health of the communities and, in the long run, contribute to a healthier and more productive South Africa.

## Phelophepa Timeline

- 1993 – *The ‘Eye Train’, with three carriages, makes its first journey*
- 1994 – *Phelophepa takes to the rails and Roche steps aboard as a main sponsor*
- 2001 – *The health clinic is renamed the Roche Health Clinic*
- 2003-06 – *HIV/AIDS awareness programmes reach millions of people*
- 2008 – *Phelophepa receives UN recognition for improving delivery of services*
- 2009 – *The train grows to its current length of 18 coaches*
- 2009 – *Established cancer health awareness service, including screening, staff training, patient counselling and education*
- 2010 – *The Roche Health Clinic undergoes a full refurbishment*

## How Roche stepped aboard the ‘train of hope’

Roche’s support of Phelophepa dates back to 1994 when Roche South Africa started to fund the salary of a nurse to work in the train’s general health clinic. From this, Transnet and Roche went on to build a true long-term partnership which has continued to evolve. Today, Roche has full responsibility for the continuing operation of the general health clinic which was renamed the Roche Health Clinic in 2001. In addition to paying the salaries of the clinic staff, maintaining equipment and providing educational materials for distribution, Roche funds a vehicle that staff can use while the train is at a station to visit surrounding villages and schools. Roche also sponsors the pharmacy coach which has some 100,000 items of medicine in stock and fills 26,000 prescriptions every year. As well as dispensing medicines, the staff of the pharmacy coach are on hand to provide expert advice and support.

Several sponsors support facilities and services on Phelophepa. For example, Colgate partially sponsors the dental clinic while numerous benevolent societies and community organisations provide monetary and non-monetary resources related to their experience and expertise.



*“This clinic is now fully furnished with all of the equipment, the latest equipment, we need to save patients’ lives.”*

Sister Thabisile Makhaye, Manager, Roche Health Clinic

#### **A long-term partnership**

Roche has a long-standing commitment to finding solutions to health challenges in developing countries. Rather than simply providing donations, we establish long-term partnerships which enable us to combine our skills and resources with those of other – public and private – organisations to deliver sustainable outputs. With Phelophepa, we work in close partnership with Transnet, other sponsors, healthcare professionals, students, and community members to achieve results which exceed anything that we could achieve alone.

Dr Lynette Coetzee, Transnet Foundation’s Senior Manager for Health, says of her partnership between Roche and Phelophepa: *“We have been partnering with Roche since 1994 and in that time, we have grown together, they have grown their support and we have grown our train and the services that we provide. They have come on board with gusto, a 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 go to them and ask for money – we very often go to them and ask for advice.”*

#### **The Roche Health Clinic – looking beyond immediate health needs**

##### **Screening programmes**

In recent years, the work of the Roche Health Clinic has been expanded to include more specialist services with a focus on screening and prevention. Today, in addition to receiving medical care for existing ailments, people visiting the clinic can be screened for diabetes, hypertension and certain types of cancer. Free Pap smears (cervical cancer and human papilloma virus test) and prostate checks can be carried out in a special tent set up on the railway platform at some stops.

Roche funded the initial training of three nurses to carry out this important service and provides ongoing support to ensure that health screening and disease prevention are available to the communities wherever the train stops.

##### **Disease prevention and education**

Improving health in the communities visited by Phelophepa begins with knowledge gained through education. The Roche Health Clinic and pharmacy coach play a vital role in achieving this. For example, Roche has sponsored the development of cancer education booklets in both Zulu and English. These booklets are distributed to visitors to the train and shared with people in local communities. In this way members of each community can share their knowledge and help to expand the reach of the train.

*“It has been a great experience to be... on the train for two weeks. I’ve learnt about different diagnoses and diseases and how to treat them. I have also learnt about different cultures. It has been a great opportunity.”*

Bulelwa Peto, a student from Thuto Bophelo nursing academy who volunteered on the train

#### **Enhanced facilities**

As well as increasing the number of services on offer, Roche has enabled the existing healthcare facilities to be refurbished to better accommodate patients who use wheelchairs and upgraded to include private examination cubicles. In addition, the coach has been equipped with vital facilities, including oxygen canisters, to enhance the care of patients who arrive at the train in a critical condition.

#### **Training student volunteers**

From the beginning, medical, nursing, dental and ophthalmology student volunteers have been integral to Phelophepa. Medical and nursing students, under the leadership and guidance of the clinic’s permanent staff, are able to assist with many of the basic healthcare services provided by the Roche Health Clinic. They also play an important part in vital community education and outreach work. In turn, the students benefit greatly from the opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt in the classroom and to gain real-life experience of working in a busy clinic environment.

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#### **Case Study: Small things can make huge differences**

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*School visits are an important part of every stop made by the train. By providing diagnosis and treatment of common childhood ear problems, the Phelophepa team is able to make a real difference. On a typical school visit, the team will ask the teachers to identify any children who they think may have hearing difficulties. Hearing problems are often caused by infections or inflammation which, if left untreated for too long, could lead to serious hearing impairments, deafness or even brain damage. By examining the children and providing appropriate medicines the team are able to treat these problems early with the aim of preventing lasting damage. Before leaving the school, the clinic staff will explain to the teacher how to continue the treatment for as long as necessary and the teacher will then pass on this important information to the children and their parents. An ear examination and a bottle of medicine may seem like a small thing, but they could make an enormous difference to the future of a child.*





# Phelophepa at a glance

## What it is

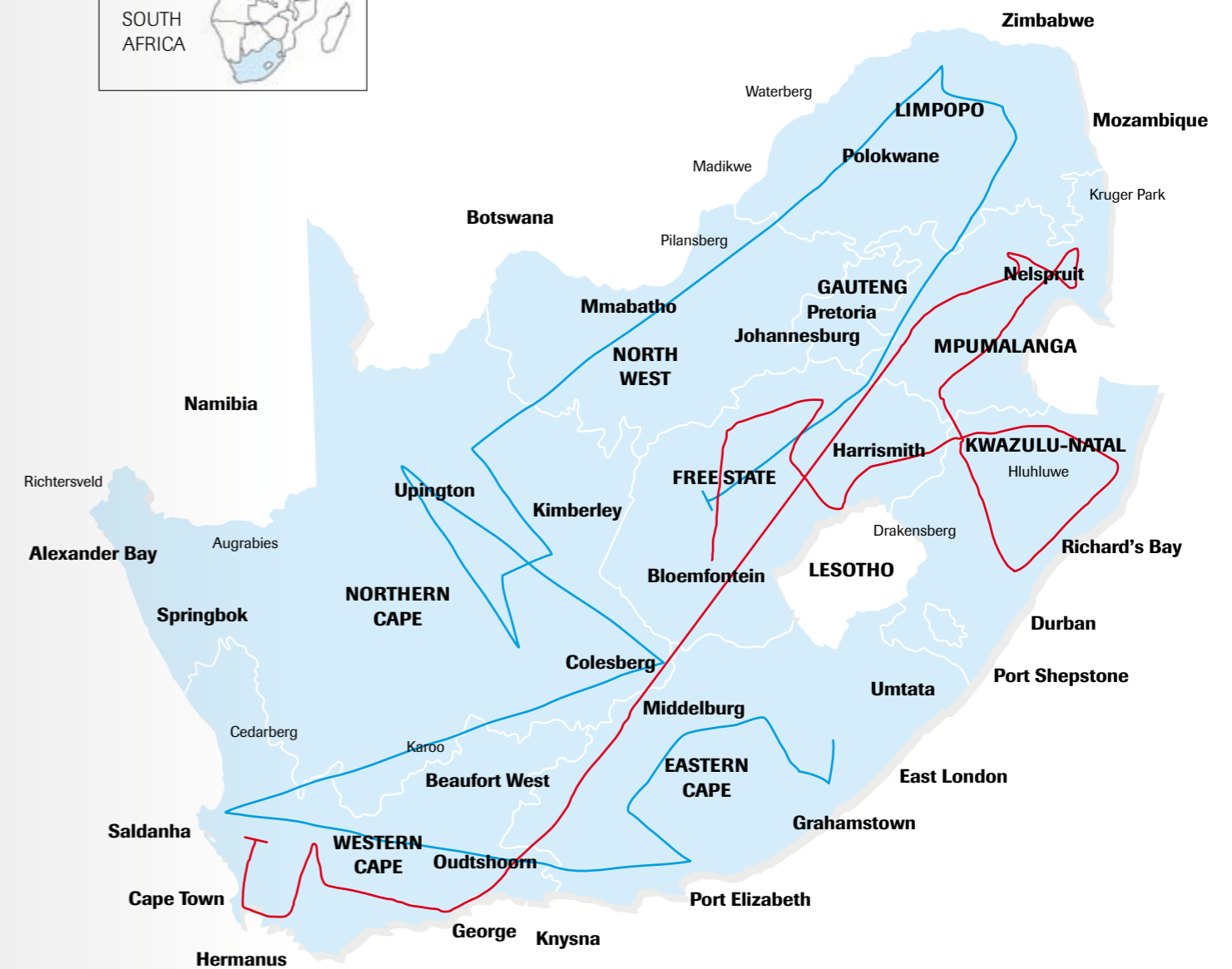
- The train is 340 metres long and has 18 coaches.
- It travels for 36 weeks of the year and visits a different community every week.
- The train is run by 19 resident staff, supported by up to 40 student volunteers.
- Outreach teams arrive in the communities where the train will stop in advance to spread the word and ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the train's visit.
- At every stop the clinic team visits schools and villages to deliver vital health checks, medicines and education to children.
- The Roche Health clinic was recently refurbished and its remit expanded to include vital health screening.

## On board and beyond: The main services provided by the Phelophepa team

- Health and hygiene education
- Screening for diabetes, high blood pressure, cervical (Pap) and prostate cancer
- Pharmacy
- Dental clinic
- Dental health education including school visits and provision of toothbrushes to children
- Eye clinic, including optician and service for producing glasses
- Psychological care and counselling

## What it has achieved

- 5.4 million people have been reached since 1994; including those impacted by two large-scale HIV/AIDS education programmes.
- Phelophepa sees an average of over 45,000 patients at 36 locations a year, and has treated 600,000 patients since 1994.
- The train's pharmacy coach dispenses 26,000 prescriptions every year.
- Over 20,000 student doctors and nurses have had the opportunity to hone their skills on Phelophepa to date.
- The Roche Health Clinic team visits around 25,000 schools a year, providing screening and health education, alongside specific diabetic and eye testing screening and education.
- Each year close to 600 volunteers selected by their communities are educated on general health.
- Transnet Foundation received the 2008 United Nations Public Service Award in the 'Improving the delivery of services' category for its support of the Phelophepa initiative.



Phelophepa travels for 36 weeks of the year, using two different routes to reach remote areas of South Africa.



*“Phelophepa is important to us because we don’t have money, we don’t have medical aid.”*

Tsima, Phelophepa patient

## Leaving better informed communities in its tracks

Demand for Phelophepa’s services is high and currently the train is only able to visit most of the communities on its route once every two years. It is critical that the positive effects of the train last for much longer than the week for which it stops in each station. As a result, there is a strong emphasis on education and empowerment in all of the programme’s activities. This reflects Roche’s commitment to supporting lasting solutions for healthcare in developing nations.

The legacy of every stop that Phelophepa makes is increased awareness of common health issues within the remote communities which it visits. It is hoped that this will lead to more people presenting for examination and, consequently, a greater chance that they will receive the treatment that they need. Furthermore, by offering education and training in basic health and hygiene, the programme spreads an important message about the responsibility that people have not only for their own health, but that of their families, neighbours and communities.

One coach of the train is dedicated to education and invites representatives of every community along its route to attend a course designed to give them

a good grounding in basic health and hygiene and to encourage them to share their knowledge widely. The course covers personal hygiene, infections, non-infectious diseases, nutrition, family health, child care and first aid and it is designed to be accessible to all, even those who are not literate. It also recognises the important role that traditional healers can play within rural communities and healers are invited to participate in the course.

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### **Case Study:** *Leaving lasting change*

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*The inhabitants of one village visited by the train had suffered from repeated bouts of serious illness. The team identified the cause of this as the stream behind the village huts that the villagers were using both as a latrine and as a source of drinking water. The Phelophepa staff explained the connection to the villagers and discussed what could be done to improve the cleanliness of the stream’s water. Two years later, the team returned to the village to find the stream clean and the villagers’ health greatly improved. This is just one example of the type of lasting change and local empowerment which the programme is designed to support.*

### **The doctors, nurses and optometrists of the future**

The Phelophepa programme has given hundreds of medical and nursing student volunteers the opportunity to experience the reality of a busy health care clinic. The volunteers work closely with the permanent staff to diagnose and treat patients and to carry out health screening. They gain valuable hands on experience of everything from diabetes testing to treating eye and ear infections and providing advice to patients with chronic conditions. The broad range of symptoms and conditions that they encounter provide them with learning opportunities that are simply not available in the universities and city hospitals. The students also play a key role in community outreach and education activities, from running puppet shows in schools to teach children about good hygiene practices, to speaking to traditional healers about different approaches to managing the diseases in their communities.

This broad range of real life experience will help to ensure that the doctors and nurses of the future have a sound understanding of the realities and challenges of healthcare delivery in the rural communities in which so many South Africans live.

### **Refurbishment brings new hope in a time of strife**

The 2010 refurbishment of the Roche Health Clinic couldn’t have come at a better time. Public service strikes meant that many clinics and hospitals were either completely closed or running a significantly reduced service, making healthcare even less accessible than usual.

The new and improved coach made its first journey while the strikes were in full swing. The improvements increased the amount of space available for examinations, increasing privacy and making it easier for parents to accompany their children to the examination rooms, as well as making the facilities more accessible to wheelchair users. The overhaul also saw the installation of new and upgraded equipment.

Etheline Mgoli, the former Manager of the Roche Health Clinic says of the refurbishment: *“It has already started benefitting patients; we had a patient here who was pregnant and due for delivery. Because of the strikes she couldn’t get help at a clinic and she couldn’t get help at the hospital. We were her only solace, the only place she could come to.”*

*“Through all the services that we provide... we strive to create healthier, better informed communities.”*

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

Services will be enhanced even further when a second train is launched in 2012, enabling even more people to access the benefits that Phelophepa offers.

#### **The view from on board**

A Transnet employee from the age of 17, Dr Lynette Coetzee, Transnet Foundation's Senior Manager for Health, is the driving force behind Phelophepa and has been integral to the initiative from its very first day. She provides some insight into what motivates her:

*“The health services that we offer on board the train are only part of the story”, explains Lynette. “The broader mission of Phelophepa is that its message and its good works will go forth, that healthy individuals will build healthy families and communities and that healthy communities will build a healthy nation.*

Sister Thabisile Makhaye, Manager, Roche Health Clinic, has been with Phelophepa for just over six months. Among her many responsibilities as Manager of the Roche Health Clinic, is overseeing the screening services which are a relatively new addition to the clinic's capabilities.

*“We have a Pap clinic which we operate wherever we are,” explains Thabisile. “We do Pap smears for ladies which can identify those who have cancer of the cervix or who are at risk of the disease... It is much better for a patient to be diagnosed early, before the actual cancer is there. When we see the signs of cancer we can refer the patient. For men we can offer a Prostate Serum Antigen*

*test to screen for signs of prostate cancer. The patients are very responsive to these screening activities because of the explanations we give them and the privacy we can offer to conduct the test – they have such confidence in us.”*

When it comes to diabetes and blood pressure screening, Thabisile knows that it's important not to let anyone slip through the net. She describes the clinic's approach: *“Patients come to Phelophepa with various ailments – from minor injuries to dental problems – and we test every single one of them who is over the age of 14 for diabetes and high blood pressure free of charge. You'd be surprised how many diabetics we identify every day through this intensive screening regime,”* she adds.

#### **Further information**

- [www.roche.com/access\\_programmes](http://www.roche.com/access_programmes)
- <http://react.roche.com/health-care-train>
- [www.transnetfoundation.co.za](http://www.transnetfoundation.co.za)





**Published by**

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

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