

Relief on the way for orphans

Iqraa Trust South Africa will be providing R 420 000 for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVC) Program being implemented countrywide in South Africa by Islamic Relief Worldwide (South Africa).

According to Ebrahim Vawda, the Iqraa Trust was established in 1994 by Albaraka Bank. Its mission is to uplift the quality of life for all South Africans by promoting and supporting humanitarian programs that are designed to help those who are most in need, to help themselves. Since its establishment Iqraa Trust has made available in excess of R 43 million for humanitarian projects. This includes programs to address the issue of poverty and hence our involvement in this project.

Iqraa Trust's involvement will give a major boost for the Orphans and Vulnerable

Children's program which aims to cater for the needs of at least a 1000 orphans and vulnerable children households effectively providing support for more than 5000 people annually.

The regional launch of the OVC program in KZN took place at Umbumbulu on the Natal South Coast recently.

It is estimated that there are more than two million orphans in South Africa and growing. The OVC Program was started by Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) in 2003 and already caters for 468 orphan and vulnerable children households. The program moves away from the traditional approach of care for children in orphanages. According to IRW's Ismat Mahomed, institutionalisation of children in orphanages can bring its own stigma and has never been a solution. Governments in the region, NGO's and

concerned sectors of civil society have for a long time advocated community care of the children.

Iqraa Trust supports the program because it is effective in involving the community or the neighbours in the provision of support for the children whilst they continue to remain in their parental home which could be in rural area or even in an informal settlement. The program is also comprehensive in that it not only tries to cater for the needs (including education and healthcare) of the child but also addresses the needs of the household thereby contributing to the creation of a supportive environment that will be conducive to the well-rounded development of the child. This solution of community care is also advocated because children's last memories of their family and a familiar structure are important for their

stability and psychosocial well-being. It is also the best assurance that siblings will remain together.

The OVC Program is being implemented with the assistance and cooperation of the Social Development Department of the Ethekwini Municipality.

Mahmoud Youssef of Iqraa Trust explained that the Iqraa Trust recognised that government and other programs are struggling to address the problem of orphan and child-care adequately and therefore Iqraa Trust was fully behind the efforts of Islamic Relief Worldwide in trying to improve the lives of a very vulnerable sector of our society.

For more information:
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