



Theosophical Order of Service (TOS)

(Founded in February 1908)

A Union of Those who Love in the Service of All that Suffers.

www.tos-uk.org.uk

HEART BABIES PROJECT IN TANZANIA

One out of every two hundred children born in developing countries suffers from a repairable congenital or rheumatic heart defect. In **Tanzania**, at any given time, more than **7,000** children and adolescents await surgery. This African state is lacking in specialised paediatric cardiac facilities. Left untreated, the children die before their **21st** birthday. There is an urgent need to send them abroad for open heart surgery.

In 1979, under the umbrella of the **Lions Club of Dar es Salaam** and with the timely support of the **Tanzanian Government's Ministry of Health, Dr Rajni Kanabar** started the **Heart Babies Project**. **India** became the favoured destination for surgery, as it offers world class surgery at a tenth the cost of that in the West. With altruistic surgeons waiving their fees, hospitals are able to offer more affordable rates. The **Indian High Commission**, in **Tanzania**, generously processes visas gratis. Groups of **20** to **30** children are sent at one time so as to obtain concessional airfares. To date **1,200** youngsters have been successfully operated upon.

The **TOS** in **Dar es Salaam** is still in its nascent stages, but is slowly growing in strength. It has chosen to support the **Heart Babies Project**. Unable to pay for heart surgery itself (**US\$1,650** per operation + extra for stent/valve) and for airfares (between **US\$1,300** and **US\$1,800** per child with escort), it is contributing towards the small essentials required by the children during their travel: suitcase, handbag, extra clothes, toiletries, biscuits, etc. Costs for this vary between **US\$25** and **US\$50** per child. The **TOS** group is a dedicated one that believes in giving the human touch to any project. In this regard, when children are ready to travel to India for their surgery, the group works prior to their departure to obtain a list of their personal requirements. Merely handing over money or just purchasing and passing on these essentials is not the philosophy of the group. The members make a point of interacting with the children and their escorts, speaking positively about their future and encouraging them to stay strong. Usually, a send-off ceremony is arranged at the main hospital or even at the airport, where members gather to lend their support in person. The same is done upon their return, so as to share the joy of their successful surgery.

For further information on the TOS, contact

Cynthia & Atma Trasi, TOS (UK), 66 Kirkgate, Shipley, West Yorks BD18 3EL,

Tel: 01274 598455

info@tos-uk.org.uk

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