

# New global partnership sees The Sunflower Fund become DKMS Africa

Following an amalgamation of the two organisations, The Sunflower Fund partnered by DKMS has now become [DKMS Africa](#), a donor recruitment centre and stem cell registry. The South African-based stem cell organisation is building an ethnically diverse registry that is representative of all people of African and mixed ethnic descent.



DKMS Global CEO Dr Elke Neujahr

Dr Elke Neujahr, the DKMS Global CEO says, “With DKMS Africa, we are now present in seven countries on five continents. In fact, from the first moment we met the South African executive country director, Alana James, we knew we were the perfect match.”

DKMS is an international NGO with 30 years’ experience in fighting blood cancer. Over its three decades of existence, the organisation has registered more than 10.5 million donors and has one of the most diverse donor pools in the world.

## Global collaboration

“A donor match could come from anywhere in the world, thus it is important that we expand our international reach. For a second chance at life, we cross borders, collaborate globally and leave no stone unturned to help patients – regardless of their geographic location. Every patient deserves that chance. Only together we can make a big impact in the lives of patients with blood disorders in South Africa and across the globe,” continues Neujahr.

For many patients diagnosed with blood cancer or a life-threatening blood disorder, such as leukaemia, thalassemia or sickle cell disease, their only hope of survival is a blood stem cell transplant from a matching donor. Only one third of patients find a matching donor in their own family. The majority therefore depends on an unrelated donor. In South Africa, every five minutes someone is diagnosed with a blood disorder.

## Second chance at life

Says James: “Our mission remains to give South African blood cancer patients and patients across the continent a second chance at life. Already, our partnership with DKMS has born great benefits to our operations and has greatly boosted our capacity. We look forward to benefiting from DKMS’s wealth of expertise in the field of science and research, and in creating awareness.”

“The most important part of the partnership is that it centres the patient at the core of all operations,” says James.



Alana James, South African executive country director, DKMS Africa

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