
INTERVIEW WITH ROGER MILLA

“I want children from across Africa to receive care without their families having to pay”

Why do you want to create the Roger Milla Centre of Excellence?

For many years, I have met people who want to help children but do not always know how to act. Through the Roger Milla Program, we want to turn that solidarity into something concrete. The proposed centre has a simple purpose: to help children access the specialist care they need, regardless of their families' financial circumstances.

Which children would the centre welcome?

We hope to welcome children affected by noma, as well as children with facial or congenital conditions. Our ambition is to welcome them from across Africa and provide their care free of charge. We would also need to organise their follow-up and, where necessary, support for their families.

Why is noma a particular focus for you?

Because too few people know about it. Children affected by noma need to be identified and treated as early as possible. Some survivors also need specialist care and long-term follow-up. We want to raise awareness and work alongside the healthcare professionals already supporting these children.

Is the centre under construction?

No. The project is in the planning stage. A location in the Yaoundé-Nsimalen area of Cameroon is being considered, but the exact site, medical programme, permits, timeline and financing have yet to be established. I want to be clear: we are presenting a proposal and working to determine what it will take to make it possible.

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How could you provide free care over the long term?

Free care must be part of the project's design from the beginning. A building alone is not enough. We must also fund the teams, equipment, treatment and patient follow-up year after year. That is why we want to work with public authorities, healthcare professionals and partners who can help sustain the centre's operations.

How will initial donations be used?

They will help fund the first steps: assessing needs, defining the medical programme, and carrying out technical, land, environmental and financial studies. This work is essential if we are to make responsible decisions and present partners with a well-defined project.

Can football help bring people together around this project?

Yes. Football connects people across countries and generations. If my voice can help make these children's needs better known and bring together expertise, partners and donors, I want to use it. Everyone can take part by donating, sharing the project or offering their skills.

What would you like to say to the public?

I ask everyone to help us take this first step. One euro, one share or one introduction to a potential partner can help move the project forward. We will report on what has been achieved and what remains to be done. My hope is that one day children from across Africa will be able to receive the care they need without their families having to pay.

It's the gesture that counts.