



commongood

Volunteer Handbook

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1. Introduction

The South African Landscape

South Africa's vibrant racial and cultural diversity is something that is celebrated today. However, this has not always been the case. Twenty-three years into its democracy South Africa, despite being alive with possibility, continues to limp with the scars of oppression and mistrust.

The vast disparity that still exists in South Africa today is evident in the crippling reality of the lives of the majority of the people in our nation who continue to suffer under the daily grind of poverty. South Africa's unemployment rate has reached a 10 year high at 27.7% (Statistics South Africa. June 2017. Quarterly Labor Force Survey). The expanded unemployment rate which includes discouraged job seekers is 36.4% (Statistics South Africa. June 2017. Quarterly Labor Force Survey).

Furthermore, South Africa's education system was ranked as the second worst in the world at the recent World Economic Forum (Business Tech. Report. 6 January 2017). According to education economist, Nicholas Spaul, only 36% of the 1.1 million learners enrolled in Grade 1 in 2003 went on to pass matric (New24 Video. Around half the learners enrolled in Grade 1 in 2003 made it to matric. 6 January 2015).

Behind these statistics are the real-life stories of men, women and children who are trapped in the cycle of poverty.

Establishing Common Good

Common Good was established in 2005 with a vision for a city where individuals and communities impacted by poverty and injustice are flourishing in all areas of life. Through our programs, we hope to write a hope-filled future narrative of realized potential. We have already glimpsed this future vision in the lives of the thousands of people that have been directly impacted through our Early Life, Education and Employment programs.

Education

Parents and communities have high expectations for the quality education of their children that will break the cycle of poverty and inequality entrenched over decades. Typically, parents in poorer communities rely on public schools to provide that quality education, and cannot afford the higher school fees charged by most independent schools. As inequality within the South African education system increases, innovative opportunities to address systemic inequity are few and far between.

To this end, Common Good is committed to working to improve the quality of public schools. Through an innovative pilot programme called Collaboration Schools, Common Good is investing in strong leadership, training and operational resources to strengthen the education outcomes in public schools that need additional support.

As a school operating partner to three schools currently – Disa Primary in Bonteheuwel, Silikamva High School in Hout Bay, and Oranjekloof Primary in Hout Bay - Common Good will provide intensive support in partnership with the learners, teachers, principals and parents of the school. Common Good aims to make full use of all available resources to provide excellent educational opportunities to children.

Common Good brings a wealth of relevant experience and expertise that will allow us, collaborating with School Governing Bodies and the WCED, to improve quality education and accountability in those schools that have opted to be part of the pilot.

In addition, Common Good is also investing in the lives of young learners through volunteer-driven literacy programmes. Learners develop self-confidence and hope as they discover that they too can read and enjoy the magical world of storybooks. We provide individual attention and care and teach learners how to read and write.

This year we are providing Literacy and Numeracy support in five different communities including Langa, Athlone, Imizamo Yethu, Ocean View and Constantia. In summary, Common Good programs seek to:

- provide excellent educational opportunities for children;
- improve the quality of education at public schools;
- demonstrate effective models of partnerships in education;
- strengthen public school governance and accountability;
- develop educators
- implement interventions aimed at the improvement of the quality of public education for learners from low income communities.

Early Life

In 2014, Common Good identified early childhood development (ECD) as one of its three focus areas. Subsequently, from mid-2014 to mid-2016, the organisation developed and piloted the Champions for Children Programme (CCP) which focused on development during the first thousand days (FTD) of a child's life – from conception to 2 years. The overarching aim of CCP was to see young children in two communities - Vrygrond and Heideveld - flourish, contributing to better longer-term outcomes for them. The key strategy was to build layers of care and support for the primary caregiver of a child in his or her first thousand days of life and in so doing to significantly impact the trajectory of the child's life.

In reviewing CCP, Common Good recognised the need to answer the pivotal question of the local church's involvement in the programme and thus in FTD generally. Hence, in 2017, Common Good conducted exploratory research to understand "What is the specific contribution a local church can make in support of the First Thousand Days (conception to 2 years) of a child's life in Cape Town?" The findings of this research have grown our conviction around the imperative to the local church playing its role in FTD and informing the future strategy of Common Good in promoting the wellbeing of people in the first thousand days, especially those most at risk during this phase.

Employment

The Zankhanyo Network (TZN) is an initiative of Common Good, which exists to transform the workforce through a three-week life-transforming job readiness journey. We aim to bridge the socio-economic divide between the unemployed and networks of employment opportunities. We aim to restore dignity and create a sense that meaningful work is possible. TZN has impacted thousands of lives and continues to make a change on a daily basis within our city.

TZN has adopted a holistic approach in empowering the unemployed by providing training, skills development and access to employment opportunities in a context where community is fostered, self-esteem and dignity is restored and life purpose re-envisioned. By doing this TZN is able to support individuals throughout their entire journey from hopelessness to finding meaningful employment.

Thousands of people have graduated from TZN's transformational job readiness programme with many of the graduates having gone on to secure paid employment, either through TZN's placement services or on their own. TZN are currently looking at new opportunities to expand the area of impact through mobile training sites and new training venues.

TZN trained over 800 Job Readiness graduates in 2017 and by 2020, we plan to have 20 Satellite Training Hubs established across our city. This translates to thousands upon thousands of people empowered to take confident strides towards a brighter and more economically active future filled with potential and hope.

2. Why is volunteering important for a Christ-follower?

The mission of Common Good is to create opportunities for people to realise their full God-given potential by:

- 1) Addressing injustices in early life, education and employment that impede the development of marginalized people; and
- 2) Inspiring, mobilizing and equipping church communities to engage with and respond to injustices that perpetuate inequality and human suffering.

One of the ways we get to do this practically is by creating volunteering opportunities where you get to give of your time to deepen the impact of Common Good's Early life, Education and Employment (EEE) initiatives and serve the needs of your local neighbourhoods & communities.

We also believe that volunteering provides an opportunity for you to experience personal transformation as you are exposed to and engage with the legacies of poverty and injustice in our city. The bible tells us clearly what the Lord requires of us... "to ACT justly, LOVE mercy and WALK humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Volunteering provides a way for us to turn love into action.

At Common Good we offer a diverse range of volunteer opportunities - including options within our EEE initiatives and Social Justice Ministries as well as other programmes run by Common Grounders and partner organisations. Please browse our website for up to date information on [current volunteering opportunities](#) and how to [sign up to be a volunteer](#).

3. What does the bible say about Volunteering?

The mission of Common Ground Church is to fill the city with the message, life and fame of Jesus.

- We do this by going: beyond the walls of our church and the friendship circles we have to a city that does not know him yet (Acts 1:8);
- we do this by being: demonstrating the redeeming work of Christ in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23)
- and we do this by doing: we out-love and out-serve people, pointing them to the hope that we have in Christ (1 Peter 2:12).

Serving and volunteering in different gospel-rooted justice initiatives is an opportunity for us to go, to be and to do.

The early church served in different ways

As we look through how the early church worked, we see volunteering and serving all over.

- We see generosity – followers selling their possessions and distributing the proceeds among those who had need (Acts 2:45; 4:32-37)
- We see people taking the time and energy to bring the sick and those with unclean spirits to the apostles (5:16)
- We see specialised service – Acts 6 tells of how people full of the Spirit and wisdom were appointed to oversee the distribution of food to widows.
- We see hospitality. A man called Judas hosted Saul just after his conversion, when no one else would do so (9:10-19); Simon hosted Peter in Acts 10:6; Lydia hosted a missionary group (16:15).
- We see service in charity, with a woman called Tabitha who was “full of good works and acts of charity” (10:36)

Jesus is on mission to reach people across this planet with his good news. And his chosen vehicle to do that is The Church – every Christ-follower. Not just the ‘experts’ who are vocationally involved with ministry, but every single person who claims allegiance to him. Every Christ-follower has something to bring and contribute to this mission. This is an incredible opportunity to utilise what he has gifted to us all. In varying proportions, we have time to give, we have talents (experience, education and connections) and treasures (financial means and intangible means). Every one of us has resource in some way that can be used for His glory. Serving His purposes by using what he has entrusted to us means that we take what will ultimately disappear, and investing them in eternal purposes that moth and rust cannot destroy.

As we serve and volunteer to continue the work of Jesus, to see the work of the devil destroyed (1 John 3:8). God is already working across Cape Town and is beckoning his followers to join in with His work. As we join together in this good work, we will indeed see the city being filled with the Life, Message and Fame of Jesus.

4. Who can become a volunteer?

Anyone is welcome to volunteer with Common Good. We are looking for people with the following characteristics:



warm-hearted

Happy to welcome and demonstrate love and compassion towards others



open-minded

Eager to engage with people who are different from you



servant-hearted

Willing to serve with humility and grace



positive attitude

Willing to engage in challenging situations with a positive mind-set



all ages

Anyone can be a volunteer: young, old, singles, couples and families



certified

All legal requirements and screening procedures completed

5. Why are volunteers important?

Communities are strengthened because volunteers:

- have time to listen and engage
- bring a wealth of life experience with them
- make friendships

Programmatic impact grows because volunteers:

- enable us to reach deeper and wider
- become advocates for what we do

As a result, volunteers mature and grow in their faith because they:

- are exposed to and engage with the legacies of poverty and injustice in our city
- choose to turn love into action
- use their talents, skills, knowledge and time for the benefit others
- develop a greater knowledge and understanding of their local neighbourhood and community

“This is an opportunity for you to play a positive role in shaping the trajectory of South Africa through tangibly transforming the narrative of poverty and injustice with your compassion and energy” – Suhail Khan

Our priorities are to

- establish and maintain a variety of volunteer opportunities that serve our 3 main initiatives and suit your availabilities and skills;
- recruit and equip volunteers like you to participate in these various opportunities;
- communicate with and manage your overall experience and engagement with Common Good and
- encourage and motivate you to become actively involved in all of Common Good’s initiatives.

6. What you can expect from us

We strive to make your volunteer experience with us as predictable, enjoyable and transformational as possible. Below is a diagram that shows the journey a volunteer would take from first hearing about an opportunity, to deciding to volunteer again.

<p>Opportunity You hear about a volunteer opportunity and choose to sign up</p>
<p>Sign-up You sign up - either at your church’s Involvement Desk or online</p>
<p>Information Within 24 hours, someone will email you to acknowledge receipt of your offer and give you more information about the opportunity you signed up for (dates, times, locations etc.)</p>
<p>Legal Your next step is to sign and accept the conditions set out in our Volunteer Policy, which includes the Indemnity Form. This confirms your commitment, captures your personal information. If the volunteer opportunity involves interacting with children on any level, all the screening procedures contained within the Common Good Child Protection Policy will be relevant to you.</p>
<p>Induction You receive regular communication leading up to your first volunteer event including information about any training or induction that is required beforehand.</p>
<p>Confirmation The day before, you receive confirmation of the time and location you’re expected to be at and who is going to be meeting you and anything you need to bring.</p>
<p>Point Person On the day, you are met by the agreed person and don’t experience any surprises.</p>
<p>Follow-up Soon after, you receive an email thanking you for volunteering and checking that everything was as you had expected. You may be asked for additional feedback. If you’d like to continue volunteering in the existing program you may elect to do that.</p>
<p>Feedback At the end of the committed time frame you are sent a questionnaire to complete and answer a few questions that enable you to give feedback which helps you feel valued. You are given the opportunity to renew your commitment.</p>

7. Frequently asked questions

How do I become a Common Good Volunteer?

Becoming a volunteer is easy! Browse through our list of recurring opportunities or our calendar and select an opportunity that suits your interests and availability. Complete the [online sign up form](#).

What do I need to supply in order to become a volunteer?

- Certified copy of I.D. or birth certificate in the event that an I.D. is not available
- Completed Indemnity form or in the case of a minor (under the age of 18), a parent/ guardian must sign the Indemnity form
- All volunteers who will be working with children are required to read and sign the Common Good Child Protection Policy as well as submit to our screening procedures contained therein.

Can I become a long-term volunteer as a foreigner?

This is discerned on a case by case basis. We don't have any official long-term volunteer programs for students or foreign tourists but we're happy to discuss.

Is this the same as serving in the church?

Not quite. Serving within your local church congregation is an important expression of what it means to belong to the body of Christ. Equally important is how you use the talents, time and treasures given to you by God to serve the poor and vulnerable in your city. Both are important and shouldn't compete with each other but act as complimentary practices in deepening your practice as a Christ follower.