

# The Volunteer's Guide

*to Fair Life Africa Foundation*

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FAIR LIFE AFRICA FOUNDATION

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## Introduction

Fair Life Africa Foundation is a not for profit organisation, which works to empower people for a fairer life. The vision of the organisation is simply *‘to see a more just and equal society in Africa’*. It operates by setting up relevant and impactful social initiatives that address common challenges and societal ills.

Fair Life Africa set up the Care Continuity Challenge (CCC) Initiative in January 2011, with the objective to minimise and ultimately eradicate the street child phenomenon in Nigeria. As a first initiative, its focus was on street children, their care and empowerment in society. Through this initiative, 21 boys were rescued from the streets to receive respite and care at the FLA Home, where they were also counselled and rehabilitated, while reconciliation was sought with their families. 14 boys have been reconciled with their families, while two others were transferred into alternative care. Fair Life Africa continues to support the reconciled children who remain at home with their families, by assisting with their education, vocational training and even accommodation and business support for families in need.

***Disadvantage to Advantage (D2A!)*** is the second initiative of Fair Life Africa, with a focus on all children, lending support to those who are disadvantaged in society. The decision to adopt an initiative like this was based on lessons learned from the operation of the CCC Initiative. The Foundation would like to see more children, who are also more likely to excel as a result of its intervention, benefitting from its support. ***D2A!*** is currently operating as children in the community are sponsored, while we raise funds to re-open the Home by April 2015, and thereby accommodate those in need.

## Objectives of D2A!

Through the ***Disadvantage to Advantage*** Initiative, Fair Life Africa aims to:

- Seek out children with potential for excellence, who are disadvantaged in society to support;
- ‘Adopt’ these children, and provide them with long-term succour and opportunities for growth (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and academic);
- Enrol children in schools/universities or vocational centres/technical colleges to learn and thrive;
- Groom and guide each child to locate their unique gifts and train them to utilise them for the betterment of themselves and society;
- Mediate between children/youths and societal agencies and structures, to enable them to navigate through the commercial, creative and political world and function successfully.

The project goal is thus summarised:

***“To identify and support children with potential, but disadvantaged in society, and help them achieve success in life.”***

## Disadvantage to Advantage Programme Plan

The main criteria for support through the programme are:

- A. Recipients of support are children, boys and girls, who qualify for assessment between the ages of 9 and 17;
- B. Recipients of support are disadvantaged in society, either by poverty in health or in wealth;
- C. Recipients of support are bright and capable, with potential for excellence with adequate aid.

The first plan of action is to locate the children who qualify for support through the programme. This will be done by:

- 1. **Community Outreaches** – that is by liaising with community leaders and informing them of our programme and its opportunities, and asking them to refer members of their community in need of support to us for assessment;
- 2. **Church Outreaches** – we will also liaise with churches, via their leadership and groups, to identify those in the community in need of our assistance;
- 3. **School Outreaches** – we will visit schools and enquire about those who are excelling, but have challenges paying their fees, so as to sponsor their education;
- 4. **Charity Referrals** – other charities or government agencies who have identified children in need can re-direct them to us for assessment and support;
- 5. **Sponsor Referrals** – sponsors may refer family/friends/associates that have excellent children, limited by disadvantage in the community. They may also wish to sponsor these individuals personally through the programme;
- 6. **Print, Publications and Media Campaigns** – through these usual outlets of seeking awareness and sponsorship for our work, we will also be able to seek out/receive beneficiaries to support.

All referrals/candidates will be subjected to a period of assessment, to ascertain their claim to poverty in health or in wealth, and also to determine their skills and potentials. A decision to adopt will be taken on a case by case basis, subject to the capacity of the organisation to provide long-term benevolence to the child. Those who qualify for support from the **Disadvantage to Advantage** Programme will gain access to the following opportunities:

- Primary and/or Secondary education
- Tertiary education
- Vocational and/or Technical education
- Arts and/or Sports Training/Development
- Life Skills Training
- Guidance Counselling
- Mentorship
- General health care and treatment
- Internships and Apprenticeships

- Small Business grants
- Employment support
- Respite and/or long-term residency

As adoptees into the programme from childhood, beneficiaries will continue to receive aid and guidance from the programme into adulthood, until they are ready to stand unsupported. However, recipients will receive continuous assessments to determine the level of support they need to continue to thrive and achieve their potentials, so as not to disempower them by being over-controlling and/or protective.

Fair Life Africa will collaborate with families, government and non-governmental agencies, as well as corporate bodies to provide the necessary support to each child. By this, children/youths will:

1. Be able to reside in their own homes where possible, while accessing care services;
2. Continue to attend good public schools, while receiving additional private tutelage;
3. Be referred to other Charity Homes for long term accommodation needs, or to address certain challenges they present, while in receipt of scholarships from Fair Life Africa;
4. Access business grants, through Microfinance banks in partnership with Fair Life Africa;
5. Receive medical assessments and treatments from partner hospitals and/or clinics.

These are some of the benefits collaboration affords. By operating in this way, Fair Life Africa will be a medium, a facilitator and a benefactor to children within the community, in need of an advantage to defeat an inherent or structural disadvantage. Fair Life Africa will also open its Home for certain children in need to receive temporary respite or long-term shelter. Shelter is one of the ways we will meet the needs of children we support, but is not a default approach.

Fair Life Africa will not be an enabler for vices or delinquency to propagate, by:

1. Ensuring that where possible, the family exercises its responsibilities to its child;
2. Requiring that children seeking certain privileges meet specific competencies for support;
3. Exercising due discipline to resident children that will be adequate in optimal home environments;
4. Safeguarding the life and rights of abused and vulnerable children in accordance with government policies and laws.

Though street children are no longer the focus group in this programme, they will still qualify for support, as they are still disadvantaged. However, in our dealings with them, our priority will be *‘to get the best (most capable/gifted) out of the street first’*. It is therefore likely that street children will make-up the numbers of those seeking shelter in the Home. In light of this, we can only offer accommodation to boys, while referring girls in need of shelter to other agencies, until another Home is opened for girls.

At any point during the programme, reconciliation with their family will be encouraged, but in accordance with the best interest and wishes of the child. Reconciled children will also be supported to attain independence, as long as they are committed to the programme of rehabilitation and self-empowerment, and do not relapse.

## D2A! Programme Challenges

The programme is not without its challenges. The main challenges relate to their accommodation in the Home, and children living in their family homes. Here are some that have been identified:

- A. As street children are not exempt from the programme, and require long-term accommodation to be fully rehabilitated, we would have a problem trying to accommodate street children and other vulnerable children in need of temporary or long-term shelter. This is because the children from the street may wrongly influence the other children, or present as a risk to them;
- B. Disadvantaged children within the community who live with their families may continue to experience challenges with their accommodation and schooling, if there is crisis at home. It will be hard to assist children without including their family to a certain extent. Consider the case of a family in poverty, who engage their children in the family trade. A child may be compelled to spend his homework/study time working for the family, and may not thrive at school;
- C. The combination of running a Home full-time, while also supporting several children in the community, will require a high staff over-head, as the Home must be adequately staffed to minimise conflict, and also to deliver efficient interventions in the rehabilitation process;
- D. Every year, the funds required to run the programme will escalate, as the number of children being supported increase, and as the children progress to the stage of tertiary education, scholarships and business grants.

## Benefits for Children, Families and Society

Aside from the above mentioned challenges, which can be overcome, there are also several benefits of the programme to the children, their families and society at large.

- 1. **Empowerment for Child:** The child will be supported to complete his/her schooling and/or learn a vocation that will provide him/her with opportunities in life;
- 2. **Protecting Family Life:** As support is given to children in need, families are prevented from breakdown, and encouraged to thrive. This ultimately results in more stable communities;
- 3. **Labourers in Society:** Being well trained and educated, the children become labourers, rather than beggars, and contribute to the economic growth of society;
- 4. **National Security:** Children that might have contributed to increased crime rates in the future are now more able to contribute to the safety of society, by being active citizens and beneficiaries to societal growth;
- 5. **General Well-Being and Fortune:** The whole society's attitude and well-being is improved whenever we perform good deeds to others, who are later opportune to help others. Sooner or later, we personally benefit, either from the direct good deeds done by someone indirectly touched by us, or by the general improvement in our society and social welfare.

## The Strategic Plan

There are a number of considerations we need to take in order to ensure that the programme is effective and sustainable. These are:

### PROGRAMME PATHWAYS

There are four main pathways to success that is available to each child. Continuous assessments will aid in guiding the child into one of these pathways. Mentors and befrienders are also available to help children to build their self-awareness and esteem, and give them the confidence to pursue their dreams.

**THE ACADEMIC** – This is the route whereby a child completes his/her Primary and Secondary education, and then chooses to continue into Higher education. This child will be focused on his/her studies, and may do vocational training recreationally to build his/her skills base. However, children taking this route will be advised not to engage in too many extracurricular activities, and use their extra time to study and complete their academic assignments.

**THE APPRENTICE** – This is the route of learning by practice. The child will choose a vocation or a trade that s/he wants to devote her/himself to, and study it until s/he has gained mastery or a relevant qualification to practice it independently. S/He may work as an apprentice or serve as an intern in a company. Children who choose this path will be encouraged to devote their spare time to learn basic literacy, numeracy and IT skills, so that they will be able to communicate well and thrive in the commercial world.

**THE ATHLETE** – This is the route whereby a child builds on his/her natural ability and strength to get by in the world. The child taking this route needs to be excellent in the field that s/he has chosen, so that s/he can be a true contender, and will not have wasted her/his investment. Regardless, all children must complete a basic level of education to qualify for support as an athlete, especially as many academies require a basic level of academic attainment in order to enrol talented sportsters.

**THE ARTIST** – This is the route whereby a child builds on his/her natural gifts and talents to get by in the world. The child taking this route needs to be excellent in the skill that s/he has chosen, so that s/he can be a true contender, and will not have wasted her/his investment. Regardless, all children must complete a basic level of education to qualify for support as an artist, as many artists spend years struggling to make a living from their talent, and need to hold regular jobs to get by (in addition to their artistic work).

In addition to these pathways, all resident children will be subject to a regime of discipline and a curriculum of learning basic life skills and home economics. Each child will have a mentor to assist them through the programme, and will regularly receive guidance, emotional and spiritual counselling too. As these pathways vary, the time-frames for attaining success for each child will vary too.

## PROGRAMME RESOURCES

### *Labour Resources*

**THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM** – This is the team that runs the organisation, and is necessary regardless of the programme in operation. They include:

1. **The Chief Executive Officer** – Oversees the operation of the Home and the Office, and ensures that the organisation is achieving its objectives;
2. **The Development Officer** – Seeks out corporate partners to sponsor the organisation and its initiatives, and follows up on regular physical and cash donors;
3. **The Administrative Assistant/Accountant** – Performs administrative duties as directed by the CEO and keeps accurate financial records for audit purposes;
4. **The Online Fundraiser** – Maintains an online presence of the organisation, communicating our activities to the general population and soliciting donations from individuals and companies;
5. **The Cleaner** – Ensures that the Home and Office are adequately cleaned, and assisting in minor errands in and around the office grounds;
6. **The Security Guard** – Secures the compound and its properties, and screens new visitors. Guards the residents of the Home against external attack.

**THE SOCIAL CARE TEAM** – This is the team required to run the programme effectively. They are supervised by the CEO and include:

1. **The Matron/Nurse** – Manages the smooth running of the Home and its activities, establishing discipline, showing care and giving nurture to the children;
2. **The Social Worker** – Carries out the continual assessment of each child in the Home, and follows up on those outside, giving recommendations for additional interventions as necessary;
3. **The Programme Facilitator** – Creates awareness of our work among street children and the general community, facilitates and monitors children receiving support within the community;
4. **The Cook/Assistant Matron** – Caters to the nutritional needs of the children and the staff resident at the Home, and covers for the Matron when s/he is on leave;
5. **Three Support Workers** – Assist the children to develop their personal, social, academic and vocational skills while in the Home, and support the social worker in delivering interventions.

The members of this team will work shifts, and often stay overnight at the Home to ensure that there are always TWO support staff residing with the Matron and the children in the Home. This will keep the staff to children ratio at an optimal level (1:4), to minimize and deal with conflict in the Home.

These two teams make up the FLA Team, and comprise of 13 persons at this level of support. It may be necessary to employ an additional social worker, as the work load progressively increases, to round off the team at 14 people.



**THE PRO-BONO TEAM** – These are the volunteers and skilled professionals whose valuable input we need to carry out our many duties, and without whom our labour and financial needs will soar!

The programme needs one or two **child psychologists** to assist in the assessment and treatment of the children. We will need two or more **tutors** to give the children basic literacy, numeracy and IT lessons, and two or more **trainers** who will teach the children various vocational and life skills. We will also need **befrienders** and **mentors** to befriend the children, and mentor them as they progress through their various pathways. Finally, we will need a good supply of **volunteers** to assist the Team on outreach, on the field doing follow up work, and in the Home to supervise the children as they play and learn.

### *Capital Resources*

**THE HOME** – The Home will need new furnishings, particularly new bunk beds with sidebars, new storage cabinets for the children's belongings, new dining tables, new curtains, new mattresses, sheets and towels, and the repair/replacement of some appliances. We also need new medicines and resources for the First Aid Cabinet, more supplies of personal hygiene items (such as toothbrushes, sponges, creams etc), more educational resources (including exercise and notebooks, pens and pencils, calculators etc), more recreational resources (i.e. games and toys), more cleaning and garden supplies (e.g. detergents, buckets, brooms etc), new sets of clothing, food provisions and kitchen supplies.

**THE OFFICE** – The office requires a replacement laptop, an additional computer and a UPS. We also need more printer papers, printer ink, folders, files and filing cabinets and new office chairs.

**THE ORGANISATION** – The organisation needs more printed and branded material (banners, leaflets, brochures, profiles, envelops, business cards and donation boxes). We need an inverter, a second official vehicle and a Minibus for transporting the children. There is also a need for general repair and maintenance of the grounds, including a new coat of paint on the building and fences.

### *Financial Resources*

**THE BUDGET PLAN** – Apart from the initial investment in capital to get the Home fully furnished and equipped, the table below shows the projected amounts we should expect to spend in the first year.

<b>EXPENSE HEAD</b>	<b>Weekly Average</b>	<b>Quarterly Average</b>	<b>Annual Projection</b>
<i>Fuel/Gas/Utilities</i>	20,000.00	260,000.00	1,040,000.00
<i>Food Expenses</i>	50,000.00	650,000.00	2,600,000.00
<i>Transport Expenses</i>	15,000.00	195,000.00	780,000.00
<i>Telecommunication</i>	12,000.00	156,000.00	624,000.00
<i>Print/Stationary</i>	8,000.00	104,000.00	416,000.00
<i>Social Care/Empowerment*</i>	87,000.00	1,131,000.00	4,524,000.00
<i>Household/Miscellany</i>	5,000.00	65,000.00	260,000.00
<i>Equipment/Appliances</i>	5,000.00	65,000.00	260,000.00
<i>Maintenance/Repair</i>	10,000.00	130,000.00	520,000.00
<i>Events/Media and PR</i>	18,000.00	234,000.00	936,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230,000.00</b>	<b>2,990,000.00</b>	<b>11,960,000.00</b>

## THE FUNDRAISING PLAN

**Trustee and Patron Contributions:** These will cover the labour costs (not included in the breakdown above) at approximately **N12,000,000** a year.

**Corporate Partnerships:** Proposals will be prepared and delivered to various corporate organizations to solicit their sponsorship of the programme either by donating financially on a quarterly or annual basis, or alternatively, by the provision of the needed resources (e.g. minibus, inverters, laptops etc). Support in the form of discounted services will be sought, particularly with relation to schools and hospitals.

**Non-Profits/International Grants:** Proposals will be prepared and delivered to various non-profit organizations and International agencies to solicit their financial sponsorship of the programme. We will also seek support in the form of physical provisions of food and household supplies, clothing and educational and recreational resources.

**Individual Sponsorships:** Proposals will be delivered to notable personalities and individuals in the community to lend their support to the programme either by donating on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis, or alternatively, by the provision of the needed resources. Friends of the Trustees are our primary contacts; however, more individual sponsors will be sought by the distribution of our leaflets at prestigious events, and distribution of our donation boxes at strategic locations.

**Professional Affiliations:** We will seek out partnerships with hospitals, vocational training centres, other non-profit partners who provide psycho-social support and other medical interventions that will benefit the children, in the hopes that these partnerships will ultimately reduce our running cost and make us more effective. For example, a handy carpenter could volunteer his services as a carpenter for the Home or trainer for the children.

**Friends and Family:** We would also ask individuals who have already identified themselves with the Foundation to continue to support the project either by cash or kind. We would build on the network of friends in receipt of our newsletters, and those affiliated through social media. The contributions from these groups tend to be sporadic, but substantial.

**Events:** We will invite friends to attend our Monthly Birthday Parties, where they can volunteer and bring provisions for the Home, so as to raise additional awareness and aid for the programme. We will also host annual Christmas Parties, which will encourage occasion specific giving and take advantage of seasonal charity drives to seek support for our cause. We will seek out event planners to promote our cause and, so, benefit from events.

**Online Promotions:** We will take advantage of the promotions available to us via GlobalGiving, TravelGiver and 234Give to raise awareness of our work and solicit for online donations. We will also continue to build our online presence through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and regular postings on our blog. By growing our image, we hope to grow our reach and desirability with corporates and donor/funding agencies too.

## THE COST-MINIMISATION STRATEGY

There are various cost minimisation approaches that could be adopted. The utilisation of volunteers, professional affiliations and physical contributions are some already identified. Other practical ideas for consideration are:

**Poultry Farming:** This can be done in the backyard and will provide nutrition for all the children, as well as serve as a vocation for some. The excess produce can also be sold locally at the Jakande Market.

**Inverters:** Despite the initial high expense, this will prove financially beneficial in the long run, as the area suffers from bad electricity supply. The costs of fuelling and repairing generators are also minimized.

**Homemade Clothing:** Tailoring and fabric design are vocations many of the children will like, and the final products are very useful for sale and wear.

**Vocational Workshops:** We have the space to construct some workshops on our external compound. These may be rented out to vocational trainers, who will also take our children in vocational classes.

**Charity Shop:** A Charity Shop will make profit from unused donated items, and also create more awareness about our work and needs, thereby encouraging more giving.

## ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

### *Who is a Volunteer?*

A volunteer is a person who gives his or her time freely to an organisation or cause. A volunteer may be young or old, rich or poor, educated or unlearned. The essential quality of a volunteer is that they are AVAILABLE to HELP in a way that the organisation/cause NEEDS them to.

### *What are the Volunteer Opportunities at Fair Life Africa?*

There are lots of opportunities for individuals, professionals and organisations to lend their support and services to Fair Life Africa. Some have been highlighted in this document. However, for clarity, there are five main ways volunteers can get involved. They are grouped into five teams:

A) **SOCIAL CARE (PRO-BONO) TEAM**, comprising;

**Befrienders** – These volunteers befriend a child each, providing emotional care and social support, whether in the Home or in the Community, through regular contact with the child.

**Mentors** – These volunteers are accomplished personalities or professionals, who share their knowledge and expertise with the children, with the hope of inspiring them to pursue their dreams.

**Tutors** – These volunteers give their time to teach and train the children on one or more academic or vocational subjects, to develop their abilities in their fields of study.

**Practitioners** – These volunteers are medically skilled and knowledgeable, and able to offer their services as counsellors, consultants, nurses and doctors (in physical and mental health).

**Carers** – These volunteers offer their time in the Home alongside the support workers to engage the children actively, monitor their interactions and minimise conflict and disorder.

Befrienders and Carers may join the Team on outreach to various locations in search of children.

**B) ADMINISTRATIVE (PRO-BONO) TEAM**, comprising;

**Workers** – These volunteers assist our admin staff in carrying out a range of tasks, including writing, typing, organising, accounting etc. They may also serve in the Charity Shop, the Poultry Farm etc.

**Technicians** – These volunteers are skilled in various vocations, like mechanics, plumbers, carpenters, IT specialists etc, and offer their services freely to minimize maintenance costs in the Home/Office.

**Artists** – These volunteers are gifted creatively and are able to assist with design, photography, videography and more, which will help in developing new media and publications for our work.

**Trainers** – These volunteers offer consultancy in their field of focus, and train the staff and/or children in those areas to promote efficiency in the organisation and effectiveness in our interventions.

Technicians and Artists may lend their support as Tutors for the children in the Home or Community.

**C) PROMOTIONS (PRO-BONO) TEAM**, comprising;

**Field Fundraisers** – The volunteers will work with the Development Officer to distribute our leaflets, donation boxes and banners at various strategic locations, and enlist support from the masses. They will also help in the delivery of proposals and corporate profiles, seeking partnership from corporate bodies. They would also refer or connect us with various organisations, where they may have personal contacts.

**Online Promoters** – These volunteers are active on social media and online platforms, and promote our work in most or all their networks on a regular basis. They will follow us on various platforms and retweet, rebroadcast, re-blog, re-post, email, forward, share, like, comment, tag etc our regular posts, and will also call, text or 'bb' friends once in a while to enlist their support during certain campaigns.

**Event Activists** – These volunteers make up the numbers whenever there is an event to host or attend and proliferate with our leaflets and flyers. They can be called upon with relatively short notice to attend an event, wearing our T-Shirts, and ready to serve in a variety of ways, including ushering, cleaning, soliciting and hosting. They are also quick to share, invite and recruit their friends to support.

Field Fundraisers can work as Online Promoters, and also be Event Activists. All the volunteers in the Promotions Team can work in all three ways, as long as they are capable, willing and passionate!

D) **SERVICE (PRO-BONO) TEAM**, comprising organisations that offer their services free or subsidized in:

**Health** – Many of the children and their family members will need assessment and treatment;

**Legal** – This may be needed for admin, e.g registration or care, e.g. child protection;

**Accounting** – This is a pricey expense for charities, especially when conducting annual audits;

**Printing/Publishing** – This is needed for producing leaflets and other materials for marketing;

**Advertising** – This would be greatly beneficial, but beyond our reasonable budget for promotions;

**Security** – This is a significant concern for guarding the Home, screening the staff and volunteers, and accompanying staff on outreaches, to visit children at home or to conduct home tracings.

E) **RESOURCE (DONOR) TEAM**, comprising individuals and organisations who regularly contribute:

**Consumables** – such as food provisions, fuel (oil, petrol, diesel, gas), water and other utilities; and

**Stock Items** – such as books, games, clothing, shoes, and kitchen, medical and cleaning supplies etc.

### *What are the requirements for volunteering?*

Members of The Social Care Pro-Bono Team of volunteers need to be screened first before they may begin to make their contributions. This is because of the delicate and sensitive work they will be involved in with children and their families. It is important that they are minimally trained, so that they do not endanger the lives of the children or expose themselves or the organisation to criticism and shame. It is also important that they are trustworthy and reliable.

Workers in the Admin Team and Field Fundraisers and Online Promoters from the Promotions Team also need to be screened before they can be trusted to handle money or confidential information about the children and the organisation. When trust is gained, they will be given varying levels of access in time.

All volunteers are required to honour their commitments to support. They should be knowledgeable in the field they are offering assistance in. They should be transparent, but also sensitive to keep their interactions (and knowledge gained thereby) with the children confidential. They must have no other agenda than to serve, and may only be compensated by provision for food and transport expenses.

In addition to these requirements, these criteria must be met by Befrienders and Mentors:

BEFRIENDERS	MENTORS
A minimum of two years commitment to one child	A minimum of one year commitment to one child
A minimum of one face-to-face contact with the child monthly (either a home visit or excursion)	A minimum of one face-to-face contact with the child monthly (for education and/or training)
A minimum of once weekly phone contact	Regular visitation and phone contact
Attendance at monthly FLA Meetings to report	Set and reach two milestones of achievement
Participation in mandatory training opportunities	

Carers are also required to commit to a term of one year at the Home, attending a minimum of once weekly. This is because the children will develop a bond with the carers, and it would be disappointing and destabilising for them if the carers were constantly changing or unreliable.

### *What are the benefits to volunteers?*

There are many benefits to volunteering, and some have been listed in the article '**The Servant Boss**', which is attached as an appendix. Perhaps you can think of more, such as how you make the world better for yourself, your family and friends and your children in the future generation.

The truth is that benefits in volunteering come as side effects and are never achieved when sought as goals in themselves. So, we encourage everyone to consider what their true goal is in volunteering, and put their all in achieving this. The amazing by-products of volunteering are often reward enough!

## Conclusion

Fair Life Africa Foundation has commenced its mission to empower people, and promote equality and justice in society through its initiatives. The heart of the **D2A!** Initiative is to provide an opportunity for the able, but hindered, to rise above their situation and achieve! The organisation recognises that many that constitute the wealth of the nation are wasting away for lack of nurture, whether on the streets or in impoverished homes.

Fair Life Africa believes that everyone deserves a fair chance at life, and given that chance, the whole of society stands to benefit from the maximisation of its resources. Helping the less fortunate is not just charity, it should be policy.

We invite you to join us to achieve our organisational objectives by volunteering your time and services, donating funds and resources and connecting us with your friends and family too. The work is much for one person or organisation, but together, we can achieve synergy!

## APPENDIX – ‘THE SERVANT BOSS’ by Ufuoma E-Ashogbon

When you look up the definition of a volunteer, one thing that is consistent is that they SERVE. Primarily, they serve voluntarily; that is freely, without coercion, for causes they choose. However, from my experience as a volunteer and with volunteers, I’ve come to recognise another aspect of ‘the Volunteer’, which is their autonomy. For this reason, I see all volunteers as ‘Servant Bosses’. Let us look at both aspects of the volunteer as a way of exploring the benefits of being a volunteer.

### The Servant:

1. As a volunteer, you must be humble. Your role is to serve the organisation/cause that you have chosen to volunteer for, in the capacities that you have identified. However, a good volunteer is easily led and directed by leadership. They are flexible and willing to take on any task that is required to promote the growth of the organisation/cause.
2. Every servant must be hard working and task oriented. They may not be able to manage whole projects, but the area allocated to them is well-maintained, and they can give a good account of their work and use of time and money.
3. A true servant is a helpful person. That is why servants are often referred to as ‘helps’. They do not only help, they *choose* to help, and they *want* to help. A servant always finds a way to make their impact felt by identifying needs and lending a helping hand.

The servant is **humble**, **hardworking** and **helpful**.

### The Boss:

1. Every boss owns his/her time. Whereas employees sell their time, bosses retain power over their time. They choose to give their time to the causes that are important to them. They do not answer to anyone for their time, for it is theirs to give to the needs they identify.
2. Every boss takes responsibility for and pride in his/her work. S/He does not make excuses for failures and look to others to blame, because the buck stops with her/him.
3. A good boss is a team player. They are able to work in teams well, as they understand the need to delegate and be focused, and the merits of other people’s contributions.

The boss is a **time owner**, and a **team player** who **takes responsibility** and **pride** in their work.

Some people approach volunteering as variations of one of these two. A bad volunteer is one who sees him/herself as the boss of their own time, but doesn’t take responsibility for his/her actions, and cannot be directed by the organisation they serve! An equally bad volunteer is one who can be directed, but takes no initiative, does only what is asked, and doesn’t take responsibility or pride in their work. A good volunteer has both qualities of a servant and a boss balanced, and serves with passion and intelligence wherever s/he is called to or chooses to devote her/his time.

Volunteers who have the qualities of a servant and a boss make for great employees! They are also more likely to become entrepreneurs, because they are leaders. They know how to serve, and they know how to lead. They know when to submit, and when to take charge. So organisations are always looking for good volunteers, who they can train up to become enterprising employees.

In regards to charity work, there is nothing worse than a lazy volunteer, who comes around in the name of being 'helpful', only so that they can potentially be considered for employment, even though they have shown neither a servant trait nor leadership quality! Some volunteers give volunteering a bad name by also being unreliable, inconsistent and unskilled! Just because you own your own time does not mean that you can't be dependable and keep your promises.

## **BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteering is advantageous for any who choose to serve in such a capacity. The world needs more volunteers to help causes and build leaders, and more people need to volunteer because:

- There are lots of opportunities to learn through experience;
- Depending on the organisation/cause, there will be training opportunities too;
- You develop your relational skills and other work-related skills, by putting to use the things you have learnt in school/college;
- You could be identified for a great position in that organisation;
- You will identify your true passion and calling, and come into your own;
- You get satisfaction from being useful and needed;
- There is also the joy from seeing the impact you are making in the lives of needy people around you, and the world at large;
- People of faith also anticipate a promised reward for the good deeds they do on Earth.

## **VOLUNTEERING FOR THE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED**

Volunteering is often associated with youths fresh in the labour pool, looking for employment or more learning opportunities. However, not all volunteers fit this category, and it is necessary to have more experienced and skilled volunteers, who give their time, not because they desire to receive benefits, but purely to bless others!

There are few volunteers in this category because a lot of the gainfully employed are not chanced to volunteer for the sake of their busy jobs. But it is a wonderful initiative that more and more organisations are taking, whereby they foster a pool of volunteers within their staff, as a way of giving back corporately to society! This means that there are more skilled volunteers with a genuine interest to help.

However, be sure that your choice to volunteer is altruistic and not for popularity, because volunteering is not easy! Remember, volunteers are not only servants, but bosses, and by volunteering, you take on a new responsibility. Do consider these manageable ways you can volunteer your time and skills:

- Volunteer for events only.** This requires irregular and occasional participation and minimal commitment.
- Volunteer on a monthly basis.** This is a more regular commitment, which is also more manageable because it is not too frequent.
- Volunteer skills only.** This means that you may not need to be present as often as those who give them time, and that you can (depending on the skill) assist the organisation/cause from your own home! You may also train/teach at times that are convenient for you.

We hope that you have found this article insightful. Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Fair Life Africa Foundation. We wish you a life-transforming experience!