



Ons Plek Projects

For Girl Street Children

NOTES FOR VOLUNTEERS AT ONS PLEK PROJECTS

Welcome!!! We hope that your work with us will be challenging and fulfilling for you, and a real gift to the girls.

Herewith some of the basic conditions of volunteer work at Ons Plek Projects.

First of all, where is what and who is who:

We have two houses, the intake and stabilization shelter (Ons Plek) in Albertus Street Cape Town and the long term treatment house (Siviwe) at York Road Woodstock, and our after school prevention programs in Philippi township.

The person presently responsible for volunteers is **Yumna van der Schyff (Unit Manager, Siviwe)**. As a volunteer you are responsible to Yumna, who may designate you a direct supervisor as well. If you are working at Ons Plek you would report directly to either the Social Worker/Unit Manager/Educator.

And then, guidelines guidelines and guidelines:

A volunteer is a person who does an important job of work without pay and of his/her own free will. We regard your contribution as very important to the project and therefore we ask for a commitment similar to that of a staff member as far as regular attendance is concerned.

DON'T FORGET!!!!:

The Child Care Workers are responsible for everything the girls do. Volunteers must **always** 'check in' with the child care worker on duty when arriving and when leaving.

WORK TASKS

Make sure you know what your work will entail. It is important to be clear from the beginning why you are involved and what is expected of you. **If you have any queries about the work or organisation, please feel free to ask.**

COST OF ACTIVITIES

Confirm with Yumna how the cost of equipment (e.g. pens, paper, photocopying, art materials, transport for children etc.) needed for your work will be covered, **before** finalising plans for sessions.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE

We will try to arrange your voluntary work to the hours you wish to give. Reliability is very important. When you are unable to come, please cancel and make an alternative arrangement as early as possible. If you cannot get hold of Yumna (or your direct supervisor if you have been allotted one), speak to the child care worker on duty.

If you feel you are in the wrong situation and you are not finding your voluntary work satisfactory or rewarding, it may be possible to find more rewarding voluntary work. Once again let Yumna know a month in advance so you can do a good farewell for the girls.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND COUNSELLING

At Ons Plek confidentiality is kept within the direct service staff team. This is made very clear to the girls, so that they know when something they share with one person may be known to other staff members as well. While we cannot share confidential information with volunteers, it is very important that volunteers make clear to the girls that anything shared with a volunteer may be told to the direct service staff. This prevents traumatic situations arising where a volunteer has important or even dangerous information (e.g. where a girl says she is planning to harm herself or another person) and then has to break trust with the girl and tell staff anyway.

Volunteers do not get involved with counselling the girls, and the following guidelines are valuable in making sure one keeps the conversation on a clear befriending level.

Do NOT talk about the past, pain, private issues and problems with the girls. It is OK to chat about the present, positives and future dreams.

For example asking a girl why she is at Ons Plek, where her family is, where her mother is, where she is from, whether she lived on the streets, what strolling/street life is like, how long she has been here, how she feels about being here, anything about sex, rape, abuse, drugs etc. are all quite **UNSUITABLE** topics.

Examples of **SUITABLE** topics would be sharing about your and her favourite TV programmes and personalities, your and her best liked sports and sporting heroes, favourite foods, fashion and hairdos, what she would like to do when she grows up, what she most likes doing and learning about, etc.

If a girl shares personal information with you freely without you having introduced the subject at all, you may listen respectfully to as much as she wants to tell you, as long as you do not delve any deeper.

If you feel uncertain about something that arises in your work with the girls, talk to Yumna or the Director, Pam Jackson.

HEALTH ISSUES

HIV/AIDS is a fact of life in South Africa. Who is HIV+ and who is HIV – is each person's private information. At Ons Plek we use 'universal precautions', meaning that we behave as if everyone is HIV positive when attending to wounds etc.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

There are legal considerations in taking photographs of children at Ons Plek, since the children are protected by the Child Care Act. You may only take photographs of the girls (cell phones included) with the permission of the Director (Pam Jackson). All

photographs intended for the girls must be given to the Unit Manager or Director. Some girls give photos of themselves to friends, leaving them with no record of their own lives. The person in charge makes sure that the photos are kept in the girls' life story albums rather than dispersed amongst their peers.

IF YOU ARE WORRIED:

If there is anything bothering you about the session or the child, discuss it with the child care worker or contact Yumna.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS:

Do not give individual children gifts.

Consult with the child care worker if you want to donate anything to the girls.

PROMISES:

Do not make promises you cannot definitely keep.

Good boundaries and absolute honesty about the duration and nature of the placement is essential in the volunteer's relationship with the girls.

Best Wishes!

From Pam Jackson
(Director)

and

Yumna Van Der Schyff
(Unit Manager – Siviwe)

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