



# **HANDBOOK**

**FOR**

***VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE MEMBERS***

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to St. Martin – Catholic Social Apostolate (CSA)! We find it a privilege that you agreed to volunteer in our organisation as a programme committee member. It is our sincere hope that we will work harmoniously together in our efforts to assist our needy brothers and sisters in the community.

This booklet introduces you into St. Martin – CSA. It describes the spirit through which we like to work, it outlines what is expected from you as a volunteer committee member and it makes clear what you can expect from St. Martin-CSA. It also informs you on some policies and regulations, which concern you as a volunteer.

## THE LOGO OF ST. MARTIN

The cover page of this booklet shows the logo of the organisation. This logo represents the famous story of St. Martin of Tours, who shared his cloak with a beggar (box 1).

## THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

St. Martin-CSA is different in many ways from other organisations you may have come across with in Kenya. Since its inception in 1999, St. Martin-CSA has categorically chosen the side of those who have been marginalized and oppressed, e.g. street children, disabled children, those people infected with HIV. In its work with these people, the organisation uses a community-based approach. This means that community members, through the spirit of volunteering, take the lead in addressing the needs among their brothers and sisters. St. Martin-CSA plays a facilitating role.



### Box 1: The meaning of the logo of the organisation

#### St. Martin of Tours

St. Martin was born in France out of pagan parents. Sharing and a Non-Violent lifestyle characterise his person. One day during winter, Martin came across a poor man, almost naked, begging in the cold. On the spot, Martin cut his cloak into two pieces and gave one piece to the beggar. In his dream that night Martin saw Jesus dressed in the part of the cloak that he gave to the poor man.

During the time of war, when Martin was called up, he refused to go into the fight. Julian Ceasar accused him of cowardice, but Martin replied that he was prepared to go to the frontline armed only with a cross of Christ. He became Bishop of Tours, during which time he kept on engaging himself in peace building, reconciliation activities and in assisting the poor.

The logo of St. Martin – CSA portrays the sharing of the cloak with the beggar:

#### The human figures and the orange cloak:

Two people sharing in love the one cloak that covers them: it calls us to become people who are just and not only people who speak about justice.

#### The blue cross, which is also a sword:

St. Martin – CSA is a church based organisation. The sign of the cross stands for the faith and motivation through which the people of St. Martin – CSA work. The sword is the one, which was used by St. Martin to cut the cloak into two pieces in sharing with the beggar. It also symbolises the sword, as being mentioned in the Bible. The apostles were called to be non-violent and rely on the sword of Christians: the Word of God. For us Christians the Word of God is our strength and the one and only weapon we should use.

Solutions to the problems of the beneficiaries of St. Martin-CSA are always looked for in the community. They should fit in the community context. Only if taken up by the community itself, solutions can be sustainable and carried on even without the presence of St. Martin-CSA. For this reason a low-budget style is applied: costs are kept as low as possible and every opportunity is sought to assist people through the help of the community and with minimal expenditures. For example, street children and AIDS orphans are re-integrated back into the community, where they find new homes with foster parents. Also disabled children are as much as possible rehabilitated with the help of their family and community volunteers.

St. Martin-CSA recognises the dignity of each beneficiary. It aims to empower them so that they take their life into their own hands and not to make them solely dependant on the goodwill of others. Each beneficiary and his relatives are therefore encouraged to contribute towards solving their problem in terms of knowledge, time and resources.

## THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERING

After being some time in St. Martin-CSA and having experienced the desperation of some of your brothers and sisters in the community, you may come to realise that you have been blessed in life in many ways. This understanding will help you to volunteer and change the life of others. Following the words of Jesus 'The greatest is the one who serves more', volunteers in St. Martin-CSA sacrifice their time and energy in order to serve the less fortunate people of the society, believing that faith without action does not have a meaning. The daily prayer of St. Martin – CSA reflects this mission.

### Box 2: Daily prayer used in St. Martin-CSA

*Our father  
remove from us selfishness  
and make us ready to give freely  
since we freely received.*

*Jesus our brother  
let us follow your example  
in caring for the needy  
always remembering that  
the greatest is the one who serves more  
and the first is the last of all.*

*Spirit of love  
bind us together  
against the ones who try to divide us  
and grant us forgiveness and mercy.*

*We ask our mother Mary to pray  
and St. Martin to protect us and bless our work.  
Amen*

St. Martin-CSA is not an organisation that only offers social services to the poor. It wants to be an *apostolate*, a way to live and practise the gospel: to build a just society in which those, who seem to be neglected and forgotten, will have a place to live in dignity. The love shown by Jesus Christ is the instrument that can make us attain this mission. It is this love that makes the difference.

In this spirit, volunteering in St. Martin-CSA is being done *unconditionally* with the conviction that we are working in order to *give and share* and not to *receive*. For this reason volunteers should not expect payment in monetary or material form.

## BIBLICAL BASIS OF OUR WORK

*"If there is any consolation in Christ,  
if we share the same spirit and  
we have kindness and compassion for one another  
make my joy complete by being united in love,  
one in spirit, one in mind and one in heart.  
Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity but  
let each of you consider the others  
as more important than yourselves.  
Do not seek your own interest  
but rather that of others." (Fil. 2,1-5)*

Jesus is asking more from us than generosity: he is asking us to live in communion. We can be generous by giving so much to the others, but this does not have much meaning if we do not involve ourselves personally. If we give bread without love, it neither helps the one who gives, nor does it help the one who receives. Those who are poor, sick or disabled, first and foremost need somebody, who is happy to be their friend, somebody who really appreciates them for who they are, recognising their value and potentiality even before seeing their problems and weaknesses, somebody who needs them.

*"Whatever town or village you go into, search for someone trustworthy and stay with him...." (Mt. 10, 11)*

Jesus is giving us a method to work: search somebody trustworthy and work together with him/her. In St. Martin-CSA we believe that there are many trustworthy people in our communities, who can promote solidarity and create chains of love among the other people. The aim of St. Martin-CSA is not to solve all problems but to involve the community in solving their own problems. The social teaching of the church insists very strongly that our society needs witnesses more than teachers, people who live and practise the gospel rather than people who preach. The first letter of St. John is even clearer:

*"If anyone enjoys the riches of this world,  
but closes his heart when he sees his brother or sister in need, how  
will the love of God remain in him?  
My dear children, our love must be not just words or mere talk  
it must be true love, which shows itself in action.  
This will be the proof that we belong to the truth."  
(1 John 3,17-18)*

Love is true only if it shows itself in action. This is why in the gospel of the multiplication of the bread, Jesus is pushing his disciples to promote solidarity among the people:

*Jesus said to his disciples: "Give them something to eat". They  
answered: "How can we buy food for so many people?" But Jesus  
replied: "You have some loaves: how many?" They found five loaves  
and two fish. Jesus asked them to make the people sit down  
together in groups of hundreds and fifties... (Mk. 6, 30-44)*

Jesus showed his disciples the need to organize the community in order to share what is available. Similarly, Jesus educates us never to assume that the community is too poor to have something to offer. He says very clearly: "you have some loaves". Also in Kenya we do not lack resources. The problem is that some people have too much while others lack even the basic requirements. This is why Jesus organizes the crowd into small groups: to make them understand that the solution to the problem is not to ask loaves from heaven or from abroad but that the solution is to share the bread that is available. And, miraculously food appears to be enough for everybody. There is even bread in excess! The real miracle here is not the multiplication of the bread, but the increased spirit of solidarity. The miracle is to transform a crowd of people into a community, a group into a family, a group of people into a church in order to help those who are in more need.

The bread is the symbol of the gifts and the talents everyone of us has been given; they do not belong to us but they are

meant to be shared, to be put to the service and benefit of the community.

*"When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person; when someone is entrusted with a great deal, of that person even more will be expected....."* (Luke 12,48)

*"Who made you so important? What have you got that it was not given to you? And if it was given to you, why are you boasting as though it were your own?"* (1 Cor. 4,7)

*"There is more happiness in giving than in receiving".* (Acts 20)

*"Freely you received, freely give."* (Mt. 10, 1-8)

Jesus asked us to search our happiness in giving and in sharing with the other people. He was very clear about the target: you need to consider everyone but especially the poor, the vulnerable groups that need more help as well as people who have received less:

*"When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbours—for they will invite you back, and in this way you will be paid for what you did. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you...."* (Luke 14,12-14)

In St. Martin CSA we believe that many people are able to volunteer, receiving their reward from God. In fact, we have great volunteers among us. These people are our best donors. Volunteers who, for example, help their neighbour to take care of their seriously disabled child or for example parents who have fostered a child, who was previously in the streets. Who can pay them? Only our Father, who does not care much for what we say and preach but rejoices for what we do to our brothers and sisters:

*"I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was poor, neglected, abandoned, forgotten, marginalized.....did you take care of me or not?"* (Mt. 23)

In St. Martin CSA we have a dream, which we believe can become reality: to promote a new spirit of sharing and service, a new sense of justice and equity; to search for common good before our own interest. We believe that this requires a personal conversion and a profound change in our heart. This change is what matters most. It is much more important than our competence and skills because if we don't make a change in ourselves, we will never be able to make a real change in society:

*"With what gift shall I come into the Lord's presence... what is good has been explained to you, man; this is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly to walk humbly with your God".* (Micah 6, 6-8)

*Set your mind on the higher gifts. And now I am going to put before you the best way of all. Though I command languages both human and angelic – if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains – if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned – if I am without love it will do me no good whatever.*

*Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrong doing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end. As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love. (1 Cor.13)*

## TERM OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer committee members of St. Martin – CSA are being appointed by the trustees of the organisation. They are first and foremost screened and selected for their social commitment, their integrity and sense of responsibility and their readiness and availability to do voluntary work. Also their professionalism and expertise is taken into consideration, though this is considered of less importance. St. Martin-CSA recruits volunteers with different religious backgrounds, in order to be an inter-faith group of people, who share the same vision.

Volunteers are appointed for a period of 2 years. They sign an agreement, in which they commit themselves to serve in a committee for that duration. After the two years, both parties, the volunteer and St. Martin-CSA, evaluate together whether the volunteer renews his commitment for a new period of two years.

## BUILDING CAPACITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Spiritual and technical formation of volunteers is given high priority in St. Martin – CSA. One needs to understand and share the mission and way of working of the organisation and need to have specific knowledge and skills in order to be able to contribute. For new volunteers, a series of seminars are organised each year, which focus on the community-based approach and spirit of volunteering. Volunteers are strongly advised to attend these seminars in order to feel part of the organisation. In addition to this a volunteer can benefit from a wide range of training opportunities, which are not only useful in St. Martin-CSA but even at the place of work. These include: *exposure visits, retreats, training on leadership, financial*

*management, project planning, proposal writing, counselling* but also technical training topics as needed in a particular programme. Each volunteer will also get a subscription to the magazine 'New people', in order to be informed on social issues in Africa.

## INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP IN ST. MARTIN-CSA

St. Martin – CSA is an organisation, which is registered as a *trust*. A team of about 60 staff members, 60 volunteer committee members and over 500 field volunteers implement the activities.

The work of St. Martin – CSA is divided in different *programmes*, which serve the needs of a particular target group. These community programmes have a high level of integration through which they can complement each other:

- ? Programme for Children with Disabilities
- ? Programme for Street Children and Non-Formal School
- ? Programme for Active Non-Violence & Human Rights
- ? Programme for HIV/AIDS, Alcohol and Drugs Abuse
- ? Programme for Savings and Credit
- ? Programme for Relief and Emergencies

Each programme has a *management committee* consisting of 11 volunteers. This committee draws the programme's policies, lays out the direction the activities should take and monitors and evaluates progress.

Committee members represent in St. Martin-CSA the communities living in the target area. As such, committee members form the bridge between the organisation and the beneficiaries.

The committee is appointed for the duration of 2 years. The members themselves elect a chairperson, secretary and treasurer for the same period by means of secret ballot.

Staff members are answerable to the management committee of their programme, but their work is supervised on daily basis by the programme co-ordinator or directly by the (Vice)-Director if that is their superior.

Each programme is represented through its chairperson in the *St. Martin – CSA management board*, to which all programme committees are answerable. This board takes decisions concerning the organisation as large.

## **ROLES & TASKS OF THE COMMITTEES**

As a committee member you are expected to contribute towards a number of tasks (box 3)<sup>1</sup>.

Committee members are encouraged to participate regularly in programme activities at field level in order to be in touch with the reality on the ground. Also visits to the office in order to monitor progress and give encouragement to the staff are highly appreciated.

### **Box 3: Roles and tasks of a programme committee:**

1. Take the lead in programme development and strategic programme planning.
2. Monitor and evaluate programme progress against set targets and monitor expenditures against the budget.
3. Ensure the programme follows a community-based approach.
4. Maintain and promote the spirit of St. Martin-CSA.
5. Contribute towards the development of rules and regulations in St. Martin-CSA and the specific programme.
6. Recruit staff and volunteers for the programme and monitor their performance and conduct.
7. Promote networking inside and outside the programme and implement awareness and public relations activities.

## **POLICIES WITHIN ST. MARTIN-CSA**

St. Martin – CSA emphasizes a professional approach. As part of this, policies and regulations have been set by the Management Board in order to run the organisation smoothly<sup>2</sup>. St. Martin-CSA highly values transparency and accountability and promotes a sense of responsibility among staff and volunteers for the assets, properties and financial resources entrusted to the organisation for the purpose of the beneficiaries. Promoting these values in the communities is considered part of the apostolate, but this can only effectively been done if practised fully by the organisation itself.

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<sup>1</sup> For specific information, see document 'Governance of St. Martin-CSA'.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, see documents on Financial Regulations, Personnel Policy, Vehicle Policy, Policy on Allowances, Policy on Regular Volunteering.

## **Policy on lunch and transport allowances for volunteers**

- ? A volunteer will be reimbursed all genuine public transport costs, which are made for work and assignments in the programmes. This includes reimbursement of transport costs for travelling from home to the office for the purpose of meetings or other activities. A special form, available in the finance office, needs to be filled if one wants to claim for travel expenses.
- ? When a volunteer carried out fieldwork (outside the office), which occupied him/her beyond lunchtime, a claim for lunch expenses can be made in the finance office. Similar to transport claims a special form needs to be filled. One can only claim up to a maximum of Ksh. 100/= per person per meal. Only for work in Nairobi, a claim can be made up to Ksh. 200/=.
- ? When meetings in the office go beyond lunchtime, volunteers will be provided with tea and bread. No lunch claims can be made to the finance office for this purpose.
- ? Each volunteer makes his own claims. It is not possible to claim on behalf of somebody else.
- ? In order to promote a spirit of honesty and accountability, especially among its own members, it is expected from volunteers that they only claim *genuine expenditures*: i.e. money, which one has really spent. If you have been given a lift or were offered a meal, please do not claim for travel or lunch expenses.

- ? The assets and funds available in St. Martin-CSA have been donated for the benefit of those, who are most in need. For this reason, St. Martin-CSA cannot provide vehicles, finances, telephone or any other asset or facility for the private affairs of the staff or volunteers. In case of sickness, death or other family problems, staff and volunteers are referred to the St. Martin-CSA welfare group.
- ? It is a policy in St. Martin-CSA that only the finance office is authorised to receive contributions and donations from beneficiaries or welwishers, so that this money can be properly receipted and accounted for. This procedure will promote and maintain the image of the organisation as being trustworthy.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The volunteer committee members of St. Martin-CSA set their own code of conduct, guiding people on what to do and what not to do as a committee member in the organisation (box 4).

## **CONCLUSION**

This booklet has explained to you, at a glance, what volunteering as a committee member in St. Martin-CSA entails. It is our sincere hope that you have become even more enthusiastic to offer your time, knowledge and skills to St. Martin-CSA for the purpose of those, who are less fortunate. For any question or inquiry, please do not hesitate to visit the office.

**Box 4: Code of conduct for committee volunteers:**

A member of the management committee shall abide by the following:

1. **Volunteerism**

A member shall be required to internalize and practise the spirit of St. Martin (the spirit of volunteering). A member shall not expect any kind of payment for services and time offered.

2. **Moral integrity**

A member shall maintain a high standard of moral integrity within the programme and the community, at all times. A member shall avoid any behaviour that can bring the organization into disrepute, such as:

- ? Drunkardness and being disorderly
- ? Acts of violence, be they physical or verbal.

3. **Punctuality**

A member shall attend all programme activities punctually (e.g. assignments, awareness raising, meetings, seminars, courses).

4. **Absenteeism**

A member, who is absent without apologies for three consecutive meetings or has given four written apologies in six consecutive meetings, shall cease to be a member.

Verbal apologies are highly discouraged.

The following cases shall be exempted. (The volunteer, however, shall notify the office in writing.)

- ? Long illness/hospitalization
- ? Maternity leave
- ? Study leave not exceeding one year.

For study leave exceeding 1 year, the volunteer shall give up his/her membership and apply again upon return.

5. **Active and collective participation**

A member shall be expected to participate actively and act collectively with other members and staff for the common good of the programme and the community. Active participation shall not only be in attending meetings but also in sharing knowledge and experiences.

Members shall take ownership of all decisions made during the meetings and should indicate in the meetings when they have reservations on decisions. Resolutions shall never be discussed outside the meeting.

6. **Respect for other ideas and opinions**

A member shall respect and value ideas, opinions, beliefs and faiths of other St. Martin staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and community.

7. **Responsibility and accountability of resources**

A member shall be responsible and accountable for resources used and/or put under his/her care. Failure to abide by the above, shall lead to follow-up and if found responsible, discussions will be held and appropriate measures to remedy the situation taken (such as surcharge / replacement).

8. **Confidentiality**

A member shall not divulge any confidential document(s) of information concerning St. Martin-CSA programmes and its content.

9. **Communication**

Official statements shall only be made by the programme chairpersons in consultation with the St. Martin-CSA management.

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