

Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network

MANUAL FOR COORDINATED ACTION AGAINST HUNGER



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"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift you have received. ... whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 4:10v

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network represent a network of churches striving towards a common goal: to be light, salt and yeast in the community for human life to flourish. Our main goal is to promote good public governance, alleviate poverty, inequality and joblessness.

During the first months of 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic expanded globally and wreaked havoc on our metropole. Many lost their jobs or could not earn during the extended lockdown. Covid-19 highlighted the inequality in our society and called the church to united action to prevent famine on our doorstep.

This manual is born out of the Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network's desire to be of optimal service to the whole community during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. We do this work in the solid conviction that God is Immanuel, God-with-us, leading us in our service to those in need.

The purpose of this manual is to spell out concrete practical actions to be undertaken by all churches. We want to do so in a coordinated way for our efforts to have optimal effect and the widest possible reach.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this manual we refer to the following terms, concepts and organisations:

- **Anchor Church:** A church with applicable infrastructure and resources in every municipal ward to serve surrounding churches and to provide coordinated support for joint action. See also *Recommended Anchor Church*.
- **Application form:** A form to either register as a Non-Profit Organisation or to apply to be a beneficiary of FoodForwardSA
- **Community Action Network:** We divide churches into action groups according to their municipal ward, where it is easier for churches to care for those surrounding them. See also *church database*.
- **Church database:** A list of congregations in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole, listed by municipal ward and maintained by the Transformation Christian Network (TCN), obtainable from info@tcn.org.za
- **Covid-19:** A serious respiratory illness caused by the novel Corona-virus, SARS-CoV-2 – see www.sacoronavirus.co.za - and easily transmitted through physical proximity
- **FFSA (FoodForwardSA):** a Non-Profit organisation – www.foodforwardsa.org, see also *30% waste*
- **Non-registered church:** See *Registered Church*
- **Recommended Anchor Church:** A non-exclusive list of churches known to be registered as both NPO's and beneficiaries of FoodForwardSA with the capacity to serve sister churches with food and goods on a short turnaround basis. The list is available from info@tcn.org.za.

Biblically seen, the church is responsible to care for those in distress. Churches throughout the metro are close to the need.

Although we work together in partnership with governmental and non-governmental agencies, the church cannot delegate its responsibility to care to others. We need to be really engaged at grass-roots level.

In this way we partake in God's action of care, provision and healing in God's world.

- **Registered Church:** A church either registered as a Non-Profit Organisation or registered as a beneficiary of FoodForwardSA
- **Safety and Security:** The capacity of church teams to work safely and securely, armed with appropriate knowledge, skills and habits, paired with the correct attitudes and beliefs
- **Sister Church:** A church partnering with an Anchor Church to provide community relief
- **Training:** Of the utmost importance to ensure that the church's teams of support workers are fully compliant with Covid-19 regulations and aware of appropriate action and preventative measures to alleviate risk while performing their ministry in communities. Training will be provided in collaboration with the NMBM Department of Health.
- **Virtual food banking:** FoodForwardSA's digital platform called FoodShare that virtually connects beneficiary organisations to retail stores and food outlets for the regular collection and reporting of surplus food.
- **Ward:** A municipal ward, a total of which 60 exist in Nelson Mandela Bay. Wards provide a practical scheme to ensure coordinated action extends to the whole community.
- **Warehousing:** The role of FoodForwardSA or anchor churches to handle reception and distribution of food
- **30% waste:** Enough food is produced in South Africa to feed everyone, but distribution channels lead to exclusion, wastage and loss, creating the need for an NPO like FFSA to link food production and distribution to excluded and disadvantaged communities.

3. A STRATEGY FOR THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM

This manual proposes a strategy for the short, but mostly the medium and long term of relief work. In our experience many churches act when the need arises, such as during the time of Covid-19. The action often subsides when the newness of the crisis is over. We value every bit of help during any crisis, but we need to develop longer term interventions that can be sustained over long periods of time.

Our goal with this manual is to lay out strategies for the medium and longer term.

As we develop plans for the medium and long term, we encourage churches to keep on doing whatever they are doing to help those in need. This manual does not intend to stop any action. It wants to add value to projects through ministry with a view to the longer term.

Let us repeat: All churches currently involved in feeding the hungry should continue with what they are doing.

4. SHORT TERM STRATEGY: FORM NEW NETWORKS AND SUSTAIN EXISTING NETWORKS

Reach out to other churches

Churches are encouraged to reach out to one another in this time of dire need. Please focus on the needs of congregants but reach out to the churches in your vicinity. Not only those you may know, or those from your own denomination or affiliation.

Phone a pastor on our church database (obtainable from info@tcn.org.za) and discuss needs, possibilities and the capacities each church can contribute . Use online conference tools like Zoom (www.zoom.us/download) to meet in virtual space.

In this way you will be able to share resources, to pray for each other and to gain insight into others' plight.

It is time to cross those difficult boundaries we normally may not have time to do.

A-symmetrical contributions are vital

Often our ability to provide for others' need is a-symmetrical: what we may have in plenty, others might need, but they can provide opportunities that we do not have. Some churches may have an abundance of resources to share, while others may be in direct contact with those who suffer due to joblessness or poverty. When we join hands, we make a difference.

This means that the gifts or capacities of any church is not superior to those of another church. Not one of us on our own is able to make a meaningful difference to the plight of the suffering. We need one another. We need our different capacities. We need a-symmetrical contributions.

Stay with current initiatives but broaden your perspective

We value everything every church is currently doing to serve. Please keep those services and ministries alive. Keep on. Yes, keep on.

This manual may help you to broaden your current relief ministry.

It may do so by making you aware of others with whom you can join forces and broaden the effect of your ministry. We are better when we work together.

This manual may also help by situating your ministry in a longer-term perspective. Since the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will last for a long time, and poverty / inequality will take a long time to eradicate, it is necessary that we minister with a view to the longer term. How can we help in a way that will be sustainable over the long run?

Invitation to a marathon

Read this manual as an invitation. It is voluntary to become part of the network we envisage. A network is a living interconnected hub with a central vision binding the network together. A network is not about a central command with central control. Individual scorecards are not at stake. It is about giving ourselves and our ministries in service to those who need us.

This manual is primarily about the marathon to support need, hunger and inequality, and not the sprint.

During the marathon Anchor Churches in relation to sister churches will be of vital importance.

5. MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Enough food is produced in South Africa to feed everyone. For various reasons food does not reach everyone, and at least 30% of food is wasted. That food goes to landfills while more than 14 million people go hungry, says FoodForwardSA. This wastage can be overcome by partnering and liaising in a constructive way with commercial distribution channels in South Africa.

In order to do so, we need a partner with the ability to unlock unused and wasted food for the benefit of our people. After due consideration and prayer, we chose a reputable partner, FoodForwardSA.

In the next chapter we discuss the mission and business model of FoodForwardSA.

6. FOOD FORWARD SA AS PARTNER FOR THE MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Established in 2009 to address widespread hunger in South Africa, FoodForwardSA connects a world of excess to a world of need by recovering quality edible surplus food from the consumer goods supply chain and distributing it to community organisations that serve the poor. More than 80% of the food recovered is nutritious food.

The vision is "A South Africa without hunger" and the mission "To reduce hunger in South Africa by safely and cost-effectively securing quality food and making it available to those who need it."

It is worthwhile to delve into <https://foodforwardsa.org/our-work/> to learn more about their work. This manual provides only a short summary.

Food banking

Food banking means FoodForwardSA is both a receiver of donations (from farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers), and secondly a donor to beneficiary organisations:



A few concepts clarify their ministry, according to FoodForwardSA's web page:

Warehouse Foodbanking

FoodForwardSA source, collect, and store edible surplus food from the supply chain and redistribute this food to registered Beneficiary Organisations (BOs) across South Africa that use the groceries to prepare meals.

Second Harvest

More than 50% of our agricultural produce is wasted. Second Harvest is their outreach programme to commercial farmers, allowing them to donate their post-harvest surplus produce to fight hunger. Second Harvest has drastically improved the nutritional value of the food they recover. Where huge volumes are donated, they partner with manufacturers to produce shelf-stable products like jams and sauces.

Virtual Food Banking (FoodShare)

FoodForwardSA developed their own digital technology platform called FoodShare that virtually connects beneficiary organisations to retail stores and food outlets for the regular collection and reporting of surplus food.

Footprint in the Eastern Cape

FoodForwardSA has a warehouse in Cotswold Extension in Port Elizabeth. We are fortunate to have a reputable partner on our doorstep.

Their contact details:

- Phone: 041 364 3476
- Fax: 086 566 8154
- Branch manager: Duane Brassel,
duane@foodforwardsa.org
- Physical address: 8 Woodpecker Street, Cotswold.

Send a message to FoodForwardSA in Port Elizabeth at <https://foodforwardsa.org/contact-us/port-elizabeth/>

Register with FoodForwardSA

Any organisation registered with the Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation can apply to be a beneficiary of FoodForwardSA. For the requirements and relevant procedures, refer to: <https://foodshare.cloud/client-application>.

Liaise with FoodForwardSA through Anchor Churches

The Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network prefers to liaise with FoodForwardSA through a system of Anchor Churches. The implication is that not all churches need to register with FoodForwardSA.

We now turn to a discussion of the role of Anchor Churches.

Donate

Please encourage **supermarkets in your area** to donate excess food to FoodForwardSA – full details on www.foodforwardsa.org. See their grocery needs list.

Churches are also encouraged to donate food, money or vouchers to FoodForwardSA, if possible.

Churches may also **donate cash** and individual donors will receive a tax exempt receipt on request from FoodForwardSA. See their donation needs list.

7. ROLE OF THE ANCHOR CHURCH

In the previous chapter we discussed the role of our vital food partner, FoodForwardSA. To summarise: FoodForwardSA functions both as:

- a beneficiary of food, received from farmers and commercial distributions channels, and
- as a donor of food to the NPO-sector, such as registered churches.

The Anchor Church serves as a link between FoodForwardSA and other local churches in our metropole.

What is an Anchor Church?

An Anchor Church is a church:

- both registered as an NPO (non-profit organisation) and as such as a beneficiary of FoodForwardSA,
- available to serve sister churches in its vicinity,
- recognised as a trustworthy partner by sister churches in the surrounding area,
- with the capacity in terms of volunteers and adequate buildings to quickly pick up parcels from FoodForwardSA, and
- to get the food packages almost immediately out to sister churches,
- with the administrative ability to compile the listed needs of sister churches and to redistribute food in terms of those lists, in order to keep a paper trail of all help offered.

What an Anchor Church does

The system of Anchor Churches release pressure on FoodForwardSA to liaise with a myriad of churches.

An Anchor Church functions as a sub-warehouse of FoodForwardSA. Its capacity in terms of volunteers and infrastructure is vital. When FoodForwardSA makes food available, it must be picked up almost immediately. A quick response time is of the essence.

Food received must then be quickly divided and shared according to the listed needs of sister churches.

Administrative capacity is also vital. Sister churches hand in lists of food needs, which the Anchor Church compiles into one list that will be submitted to FoodForwardSA. Once the food is received, it must be divided according to those listed needs.

Invitation to be an Anchor Church

The goal is to have at least one Anchor Church per municipal ward.

Anchor Churches will almost always be invited by the NMB Church Leader Network to serve in the role of an anchor church. The Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network will mandate a group of senior leaders to oversee the invitation of Anchor Churches to fulfil this role.

There is no fixed criteria for the invitation to become an Anchor Church. Where there are persons or people in churches with appropriate capacity who have shown an interest in working together in an ecumenical environment, they can be approached to be an Anchor Church. The NMB Leader Network also reserves the right to decommission an Anchor Church.

Anchor Churches could share resources with other Anchor Churches to ensure proper distribution.

We cannot all be Anchor Churches. We need more sister churches than Anchor Churches. Remember, it is about servant leadership.

List of Anchor Churches

Our strategy is to have at least one Anchor Church in every municipal ward. A list of invited Anchor Churches will be available at info@tcn.org.za and will be continuously updated and distributed.

Sister Churches

The vital partners in serving the plight of those suffering due to the Corona pandemic are a myriad of Sister Churches, each connected to an Anchor Church.

Sister churches may also receive food and other support in terms of existing networks, friendships or relations they are part of. Our strategy welcomes these supporting relationships and does not want to replace it.

Each church thus has four options:

- Join an Anchor Church in your municipal ward who is willing to assist them with their collections, packaging and distribution
- Well-resourced churches can establish or continue existing relationships with churches in other wards
- Register as an NPO and with FoodForwardSA and continue with ministry on its own
- Continue with your own existing support systems, e.g. the contributions of your church members.

The benefits of our strategy of networks of Anchor and Sister Churches are clear:

- We have a streamlined network of help and support throughout the whole metropole
- We lessen the load on FoodForwardSA
- We embody the Biblical principle of the church as Body of Christ where all the necessary gifts work together in a pattern of servant leadership
- We utilise churches, since churches are dispersed throughout the metropole and remarkably close to the need
- Churches are respected and generally seen as trustworthy and honest (we need to keep it this way)
- We distribute help with the speed of light – many hands make light work of huge challenges.

8. HOW TO REGISTER AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION

It has huge benefit for any church to register as a non-profit organisation. It may be a long process, which means it is better to start sooner rather than later.

Apply at the following website as an NPO:

<http://www.npo.gov.za/PublicNpo/WebApplicationCase/Register>

A church must register with the Department of Social Development. More information is available at <http://www.npo.gov.za/PublicNpo> and <https://www.gov.za/services/register-nonprofit-organisation>.

Valuable insights are shared about NGO's in general and NPO's in particular at <https://briefly.co.za/28351-how-register-ngo-south-africa-2020.html>

9. SAFETY, SECURITY AND COVID-19 COMPLIANCE

Covid-19 compliance is vital. Health and Safety Guidelines for volunteers are of the utmost importance. Please consult www.sacoronavirus.co.za for a wealth of continuously updated information.

Training will be provided in collaboration with the NMBM Department of Health.

Health Guidelines

1. Hands to be sanitised always before and after handling goods.
2. Rubber disposable gloves can only be used once with every packing and drop-off and must be disposed of immediately after completion.
3. Where possible, maintain social distancing even while packing goods.
4. Every volunteer to have their own personal re-washable cloth mask.
5. Masks must always be worn when dropping off goods.

Safety Guidelines

1. Place individual food parcels in black bags to be less obvious.
2. Package food parcels a safe distance away from the area you will be serving, preferably in another safer suburb.
3. Use a garage or venue that is not visible to outsiders.
4. Avoid the gathering of people to one drop-off point.
5. Ideally, door to door drop offs are safer.
6. NB. Only use local people to do the drop-offs. Do not use strangers to the community.
7. Make sure that every team going out has a charged cell phone with airtime and data. Also make sure that vehicles have enough fuel.
8. A minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 preferably men per drop-off vehicle.
9. Never leave drop-off vehicle unattended. Driver always at the wheel keeping lookout and the motor running.
10. Only 1 person enters home to do drop-off and maintains no physical contact with family but leaves parcel at door after it is opened and leaves immediately.
11. The Leader must ask for immediate feedback after every drop-off for evaluation and improvement purposes.

10. OTHER RESOURCES

It is important to take note of the work, strategies and insights of other churches and ecumenical bodies.

The **South African Council of Churches** developed excellent resources on "Care in a time of Corona". Visit <https://churchinaction.org.za/>. Information is available in 11 languages. It provides accessible information on the Coronavirus and action steps for church leaders and church communities, e.g.

- How to conduct funerals
- Local Ecumenical Action Networks (LEAN's)
- Stories of Hope
- Caring for caregivers
- Managing your money

The **World Council of Churches** has excellent resources and connects us with the global response of the church to the Corona pandemic. Visit www.oikoumene.org.

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality has a practical vision for churches to use their land for the **cultivation of vegetables**. A vegetable garden in your community where fresh, nutritious produce is available is a huge blessing for all. Give it a try.

11. IN CONCLUSION

This venture is the Church in Nelson Mandela Bay's humble service to God our Father, Jesus Christ our Lord, through the live-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

All questions and proposals for the refinement of our strategy can be directed to info@tcn.org.za.

God bless Africa,

Nelson Mandela Bay Church Leader Network

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