

Time to change the world - 365 days a year

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The Vodacom Change the World programme has given a unique opportunity to ordinary South Africans to do exactly that.

"The Change the World initiative is a wonderful project because it has touched and changed so many lives and I am proud that I grabbed the opportunity when it was offered, as I have achieved more than even I envisaged," says Linda Louw, one of the winners from the Vodacom Change the World 2011 programme.

Vodacom selects 10 volunteers annually for the programme, to donate themselves for a year of their lives to volunteering their time and skills to make a difference at various pre-selected Non Profit Organisations (NPOs) across the country. The volunteers get the opportunity to change the world of others but also to change their own world by giving up their jobs, and in some instances even relocating.

Volunteer Rachael Tembo is working with Jo'burg Child Welfare for a year. She says: "Helping to protect children is fulfilling to me. The volunteer opportunity enables me to achieve what I am really passionate about. It also allows me to gain relevant experience in my field of monitoring and evaluation."

Although volunteering benefits the community and charitable organisations, it also provides benefits to the volunteer, such as leadership possibilities which can improve self-confidence, but most importantly provide self-fulfilment. What a volunteer achieves positively affects others – it is an opportunity to be part of the solution.

"The time our 10 volunteers donate over a year is equivalent to over 26,000 people giving up 67 minutes to volunteer on Mandela Day, that's at least 1.7 million minutes each year! We believe our programme enables our volunteers to make every day a Mandela Day and address the critical need for volunteerism in this country every day of the year," says Portia Maurice, Head of innovation and partnering at Vodacom.

Maurice continues: "Vodacom implemented the Change the World initiative as we believe in investing in volunteerism in a focused and sustainable way. It is through the efforts of ordinary South Africans who are willing to give their time and skills to become extra-ordinary South Africans that transformation in our country will take place. We have seen how the volunteers in this programme have not only made a difference in many people's lives, but have also contributed to the organisations' sustainability through imparting their knowledge, skills and experience on a long term basis. We encourage all South Africans to consider how they can contribute their time (and everyone can) one day at a time, one step at a time, to change the world."

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