

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK FOR NYUMBANI VILLAGE - KITUI

The location of the village is very remote. It's 14km from the road, 33km from the town of Kitui. At present there is electricity during the day at the administration building, polytechnic and clinic. The guest house has solar electricity that enables charging of small accessories (phone, iPod, camera, etc.) during the day and limited light in each bedroom at night. Dark falls at around 6:30. There is mobile phone access. Internet is accessible in the village by buying a mobile broadband modem. Kitui has internet cafes that provide relatively fast internet speed. A mobile phone and mobile broadband modem can be purchased in any large town or city for an affordable price. Laptops can be charged in certain buildings in the village.

WATER

Treated water is available at the guest house for drinking. Untreated, salinated water is available at outdoor spigots throughout the compound but should not be consumed as drinking water. Storing bottled water for personal consumption is advised just in case of water shortage. Bottled water can be purchased in Nairobi or Kitui.

HOUSING

Volunteers live in the guest house or in houses built for families but not yet occupied. The rooms have bunk beds, depending on the number of volunteers you may be required to share a room. The guest house consists of 8 sleeping rooms with bathrooms and a dining area. Family homes include sleeping rooms, living room, bathrooms and a small kitchen area. The bathrooms are equipped with eco-toilets (See below). The volunteer fee is \$150 US Dollars per month and should be paid within the first week after arrival.

MEALS

Meals are served at the guest house. Breakfast is before 8:30, tea is at 10:00 and 4:00 at the admin building. Lunch is served at 1:00 and dinner at 7:00 in the guest house. The food is traditional African food: ugali, rice, beans, sukuma wiki, chapatti, mandazi, sweet potatoes and sliced bread. There are limited fresh fruits and vegetables and occasionally meat is available. You should supplement your diet with multivitamins and calcium. There is no refrigeration available. Many volunteers bring their own food such as pasta and snacks, non-refrigerated staples such as peanut butter to help provide a variety of food. The food is generally safe although some volunteers have suffered from dysentery. Most volunteers gather at the guest house for evening social time. There is lots of conversation, games to play, and book sharing.

ECO TOILETS

Each house, including the guest house, has a specially constructed toilet system that collects urine and feces separately which is then used to make manure. The trays are collected during the week for recycling. There are no traditional toilets and no running water in the houses or guest houses. You are expected to provide your own toilet paper and necessary sanitary items.

SHOWERS AND LAUNDRY

There is a drain on the floor of the bathroom for “bucket showers.” You should provide your own towels and soap. You can hand wash your own laundry or pay a village woman to do it for you. A clothesline is provided but you will need to provide your own laundry soap and clothes pins.

WEATHER

The weather is very hot and dry. July may be somewhat cooler but it is still very warm. The sun is very intense and it’s important to use sun block and stay hydrated. November is the rainy season though there is very limited rain.

LANGUAGE

Most of the Kenyans in the village are from the Akamba tribe. The administrative and professional staff speaks English and Kiswahili. Children in the primary grades are learning to speak those languages, at present they speak their mother tongue, Kikamba. The children in secondary school speak English. The people in the village are very welcoming to volunteers and delight in teaching them the traditional greetings. Volunteers participate in village social functions. There is Catholic Mass every Sunday morning in the social hall.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Village residents dress in traditional African dress. Volunteers are expected to dress modestly. For females, clothing that reveals shoulders, knees, back and stomach (such as tank tops and shorts) is not appropriate. Knee length skirts and capris are acceptable. For males, clothing that reveals shoulders, back and stomach (such as tank tops) is not appropriate. A more thorough cultural orientation will be given to you after your arrival in the village.

TIME OFF AND TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE

Volunteers are allowed 7 days of time off for every six weeks in the village. Nyumbani volunteers need approval from the Village Manager before taking time off. A vehicle provides transport to the closest town, Kwa Vonza, on most weekends. In Kwa Vonza transportation can be taken to Kitui and Nairobi. There is occasionally village transport to Nairobi, but volunteers need to book with administrative staff at least 3 days in advance as there is not always room in the car. If a volunteer desires housing accommodations at Nyumbani Home in Karen, the Village Manager must approve and then the volunteer must notify the Volunteer Coordinator in Karen at least 24 hours in advance. Housing at Karen is specifically designated for Nyumbani Program Volunteers only. Volunteers are expected to be in the Village Monday-Friday from 8-5. If you need to be away longer, you need to inform the Village Manager. If a volunteer is leaving the Village compound for the day, it is necessary to inform the Village Volunteer Coordinator and sign out. Safety measures should be taken when traveling outside the village.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

There is a nurse in the village 7 days per week. The nearest hospital is in Kitui. There is a police post in the village and 2 officers on patrol in the area at all times. There are snakes, mosquitoes, scorpions and other wildlife in the region. Anti-malarials are recommended. Volunteers are provided with the medical care. If a volunteer is feeling ill, need a blood sample, or just need to speak to a nurse one can be found at the Village Clinic.

MALARIA

Malaria is a major concern when working at the Village so all precautions must be taken. You should consult with your doctor about which malaria medication is best suited for you. You must bring a mosquito net and repellent in order to minimize your chances of contracting malaria. If all precautions are taken, contracting malaria should not be a major issue. However, malaria is a serious disease and if you are experiencing symptoms see a nurse and get a blood test performed immediately.

PROJECTS

Volunteers are expected to discuss their projects and expectations with the village Volunteer Coordinator and Manager. They will have a list of volunteer duties and suggested projects. Projects must be approved by the Village Manager. Any research or data collection that is done will need to be approved by the COGRI Board of Directors and subsequently by Kenyan Ministry of Science and Technology. The volunteer will be expected to obtain that approval.

ROLE MODELS

Nyumbani volunteers are role models for our children. Therefore, we expect their behavior to reflect the morals and values that are taught to our children.

VISAS

Most volunteers get a three month tourist visa costing \$25 USD at the airport when they arrive. This same visa is also issued by the Kenyan embassies in most countries. It is important to remember that these visas can only be extended once, for three months, while in Kenya. After that, the visas expire and you must leave the country. For this reason, volunteers are not permitted to volunteer for longer than 6 months.

THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The Nyumbani Volunteer Coordinator, in Karen, has the overall responsibility of coordinating the volunteer program and acts as the liaison between the management and volunteers. When possible, there is a Village Volunteer Coordinator who operates in a similar capacity in the Village.

The volunteer coordinator is here to be sure you have a fulfilling volunteer experience. Therefore, the coordinator is available to field all of your questions, comments and complaints.

TERMINATION

The management may terminate your service if you:

- Harm a child in any way
- Do not respect the staff, children or grandparents
- Are absent from assigned duties
- Are willfully and consistently negligent in performing assigned duties
- Engage in unauthorized dealings with outsiders for personal interest, or unauthorized research, or activities contrary to the interests of the village
- Repeat minor offences which relate to discipline
- Are found guilty of theft or misappropriation of the village resources
- Smoking in front of children
- Intoxication and/or illegal drug use
- Role model in a way that is contrary to our moral beliefs and values. This includes inappropriate sexual activities.
- Misconduct outside Nyumbani that would endanger your well-being and /or tarnish Nyumbani's public image
- Leaving Village without informing staff or volunteer coordinator

Volunteers are a valuable asset and contribute a great deal to Nyumbani. They can make a tremendous impact on the lives of our children. The staff and children are very welcoming and enjoy spending time getting to know the volunteers. Most volunteers will find their time at Nyumbani Village incredibly fulfilling.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS for the VILLAGE

Every item in the main list below can be purchased upon arrival in Nairobi or at Kitui during weekends. Certain items are low quality or difficult to find in Kenya and should be brought from home. These items are marked with an asterisk (*).

Main List of Recommended Items

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| *2 strong flashlights with extra batteries | *Books |
| *Headlamp | Wipes |
| Candles | *Hat |
| Matches | *Bandana |
| *Solar lamp | *Sunglasses |
| Toilet paper | *Sun block (SPF #30 or higher) |
| Hand mirror | Handkerchiefs or tissues |
| Dettol antibiotic solution | Pillow and Linens |
| Organic laundry soap | *Mosquito net |
| Body soap | *Mosquito Repellant |
| 2 towels | *Boots or Hiking/All-Purpose Shoes |
| Washcloth | *Sneakers |
| Small plastic pitcher | *Socks |
| Pens | *Jacket |
| Pencils | *Rain jacket |
| Notebook | *Sweatshirt |
| *Journal | *Shorts (males can wear) |
| Bottled water | *Long sleeved T shirts |
| Purell or other instant hand sanitizer | *Long pants |
| *Personal first aid kit (should include | *Capris |
| Benadryl, antibiotic ointment, pain | *Long Skirt (extends past knees) |
| reliever, antibiotic Ciprofloxacin) | *Sandals and/or flip-flops |