

AFRICAN AIDS FOUNDATION

An Australian NGO Providing a Better Future
for African Children and Their Communities.



Volunteer Information Pack

www.africanaidfoundation.org

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Introduction

Volunteering is an excellent way to find out about other cultures and ways of life. Through volunteering with African AIDS Foundation you will gain a greater insight into the needs of people facing immense hardship as a result of the AIDS pandemic. As a volunteer you will contribute toward providing a better future for African children and their communities. African AIDS Foundation supports a number of organisations in South Africa and Kenya that rely on volunteers for much, if not all, of the activities in which they are involved. The majority of these volunteers are local people who have worked for many years with these organisations. Others are people such as you, drawn from all around the world.

Following are brief answers to some frequently asked questions that we hope you will find helpful as you consider volunteer service with African AIDS Foundation.

Where can I go for Volunteer Service with AAF?

Volunteer opportunities are available with our partners in Africa:

- Philakahle Wellbeing Centre
- Zamimpilo Training Centre
- Springs of Katartismos Africa (SOKA)
- Tabitha Ministries
- God's Golden Acre

Philakahle Wellbeing Centre

Philakahle Wellbeing Centre is situated in Bergeville, a couple of hours by car from Pietermaritzburg. AAF is the principal funder for this organisation and it has been encouraging to see growth and success of this organisation in the following areas:



Philakahle's main building

- ❖ Income generating garden projects for community groups and individuals,
- ❖ Healthy living and nutrition management education programs,
- ❖ Antiretroviral roll-out and support programs,
- ❖ Workshop and training programs in relation to AIDS awareness,
- ❖ Micro-enterprise training and start-up support,
- ❖ Life skills and leadership training programs.

Only a few volunteers at a time can be utilised at Philakahle. Volunteers are also responsible for their own accommodation, though Philakahle can assist in securing a suitable place to stay.

Zamimpilo Training Centre

Zamimpilo Community Centre is situated in the Emmaus Community in the Ohkahlamba Municipality. It was established over 25 years ago by World Vision and over the years has been used as a centre for various community projects such as a feeding centre, brick making, sewing, a bakery, training and accommodation and gardening. In 2004 the Emmaus Community Committee, under whom the Centre was operating at the time, approached Philakahle Wellbeing Centre, (an NGO working in community development in Bergville), to request it take on the management and running of the centre, which Philakahle agreed to do. The site has recently undergone extensive renovations so that it could be used more effectively within the community of Emmaus. There is still much work to be done as Zamimpilo works towards a vision for the following services:

- ❖ Accommodation and training centre providing affordable accommodation for people to attend workshops and trainings on HIV/AIDS, agricultural training, life skills training for orphans and vulnerable children, and leadership training.
- ❖ Provide a facility to local community groups who will partner with Zamimpilo to provide a variety of services such as youth programs, crèche activities, church services, rehabilitation services, and computer training to the local community.



One of the Rondavels (sleeping huts)

AAF has had a number of volunteers serve at Zamimpilo, both individuals and groups.

Springs of Katartismos Africa (SOKA)

SOKA is an organisation based in Kenya, which is focused on the empowering of African Pastors and other leaders to bring hope and transformation to their communities. Its key activities include:



Community Centre that hosts many programs

- ❖ A pastoral leadership training institute,
- ❖ A women's leadership training institute,
- ❖ A youth advocacy program,
- ❖ Education programs on schools about HIV/AIDS,
- ❖ Programs that encourage an expanded role for Christian churches in dealing with HIV/AIDS.

AAF is yet to send a volunteer to SOKA however they are able and willing to take a number of volunteers to contribute to their many activities and programs.

Tabitha Ministries

Tabitha Ministries began in May 1998 and is located in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. This organisation has developed a comprehensive range of programs to assist the community and urban areas. Tabitha's programs include:

- ❖ Providing respite care for HIV Positive patients at their Hope Centre,
- ❖ Providing Home-Based Care facilities in both urban and rural communities,
- ❖ Providing school age and adult training on HIV/AIDS,
- ❖ Facilitating micro-enterprise projects for sustainability in the local community,
- ❖ Providing care for orphaned and abandoned children, ranging from babies to teenagers.



A Volunteer at Tabitha

Tabitha is able to accommodate volunteers but can only have a few people at any one time.

God's Golden Acre



God's Golden Acre (GGA) is located half way between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the valley of 1000 hills. GGA is involved in the care of children who have been orphaned or abandoned because of HIV/AIDS related illness or violence. Rather than simply putting children in orphanages, GGA aims to develop communities to create sustainable means for children to care for themselves and to rebuild their communities.

The principal activities of GGA include:

- ❖ Providing for more than 5000 orphans and their extended families in rural areas,
- ❖ Development of community skills in agriculture to improve food production,
- ❖ Early education programs for teachers and pre-schoolers,
- ❖ Self-help development programs in arts and crafts projects,
- ❖ Small business skills training and support,
- ❖ Operating an orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS,
- ❖ Child sponsorship programs,
- ❖ Youth development and life skills training events,
- ❖ Youth development programs in performing arts and sports.

GGA is able to accommodate many volunteers who are involved in many different areas of work.

Do I need any particular qualifications to be a volunteer?



No particular qualifications are required to be a volunteer with AAF. However a background in medical and allied health fields, teaching, childcare or any trade would be helpful. So far, volunteers with AAF have included a journalist, photographers, teachers, mechanics, electricians, a physiotherapist, nurses, students, clerks, and a grandmother. The only essential qualifications are a big heart, a desire to work hard, and an ability to fit in with the existing team.

African AIDS Foundation will arrange some orientation for successful applicants concerning HIV/AIDS, living and working in South Africa or Kenya, and cultural awareness.

Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.

What sort of work would I be doing?

This will depend on the organisation with which you spend time and the experience and qualifications you have to offer. AAF will always try to place you in an organisation in which you will be able to use your natural gifting and specific qualifications.



Volunteers may work with babies or teenagers. You may be involved in emergency relief such as delivering food and medicines to those in need. There are a number of grass roots development initiatives such as market gardening, vocational training and job creation, and sports and cultural programs.

There are many practical areas that volunteers can help such as building projects, sports events and holiday activities for children.

How long do people volunteer for?

The most effective volunteer is one who is able to maximize their contribution by spending a reasonable time with an organisation. It is important to understand the impact a volunteer can make on an organisation and in particular the people. To volunteer for less than 3 months can make it difficult in terms of particular projects, especially if working with small children. It is not healthy for young children to have to build strong connections with new volunteers every month or so. This can be confusing to them and can affect their sense of security.

By staying for 3 to 12 months a volunteer gains more understanding of the situation in which they find themselves as well as earning the trust of those with whom they are working. A volunteer who wishes to stay for a significant period of time is a great asset and will be welcomed by most organisations. This commitment is the hardest one to make but is certainly the most rewarding.

How many volunteers are there?

This will vary with each organisation. They all have a blend of local and visiting volunteers. The amount of volunteers that each organisation can take will also depend on the length of the volunteers stay. Over the past years AAF has sent individuals, pairs, small groups and even a group of ten.

What sort of hours would I work?

Hours will vary depending on the type of work you are involved in and will be negotiated with the leaders of the organisations as part of your application process. These leaders are very aware of the need to consider the well-being of themselves and their volunteers and ensure suitable recreation time.

The African work culture is slightly different and it is unlikely that you would be working in a "9 till 5" position.

Do I get any time off?

Again, time off will be negotiated with the leaders of the various organisations. As the work is often heart breaking and stressful it is advisable to regularly take time to rest and recuperate. These organisations are flexible and, within reason, will work with a volunteer's plans. It is also understood that voluntary placement is often part of your broader travel plans.

AAF would encourage all volunteers to take some time to experience the African culture and amazing sights. A safari is a great way to unwind after or during a volunteer placement and would be a memorable experience.



A group of volunteers take a day trip to Spioenkop Game Park

What is the accommodation like?

At God's Golden Acre and Tabitha the volunteer accommodation is basic. Volunteers can expect to share a room with a few other people. Bathroom facilities are also shared.

At Philakahle Wellbeing Centre and SOKA no accommodation is available but assistance would be offered in finding suitable lodgings, such as local bed and breakfasts or billeted accommodation.

Zamimpilo Training Centre does have its own accommodation however depending on the number of volunteers and the programs running this accommodation may not be suitable. In this case AAF along with Zamimpilo will help to find appropriate accommodation.

What do the organisations provide?

At God's Golden Acre volunteers are given accommodation and a basic evening meal is provided daily, together with some other basic items such as margarine, sugar, powdered milk, tea, coffee, some fresh vegetables and soup. A small supermarket is close-by for weekly shopping.

Tabitha can provide basic accommodation including a kitchen. The volunteers must meet all other necessities. Pietermaritzburg is a major city and so volunteers can source all needs through local shops and banks.

Philakahle is not in a position to provide accommodation or meals. However in Bergville, where Philakahle is placed; there are supermarkets and banks but no major retail shops. All your basic needs can be found in the town.

Zamimpilo is in a similar position to Philakahle. If it can be arranged, the accommodation that is available has its own kitchen with basic equipment and the huts are quite comfortable with single beds (10 to a room) and linen.

How much does it cost per week to live?

This is difficult to answer and depends on the individual. To cover the absolute essentials, volunteers should allow AUD \$50 per week per person, but please keep in mind that this would cover very basic items only, and not include any 'extras' or accommodation costs.

What about a visa, vaccinations and travel insurance?

Shorter-term volunteers (up to 90 days) should be able to access a tourist visa. However, longer-term volunteers will require a different type of volunteer visa. All Visa related enquiries should be directed to:

South African High Commission

Cnr State Circle & Rhodes Place, Yarralumla ACT 2600

PH: 02 6272 7300

FAX: 02 6273 3203

Email: info@sahc.org.au

Please make sure you contact the South African High Commission about your travel plans and visa requirements, whether short term or long term, to ensure your safety upon arrival in South Africa.

Enquiries for Visa Requirements for travel to Kenya should be directed to:

Kenya High Commission
GPO BOX 1990 Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6247 4788
Fax: 02 6257 6613
Email: khc-canberra@kenya.asn.au

AAF along with the organisation you are being sent to can provide a letter in support of your application and to confirm your plans for voluntary work.

Vaccination requirements will depend upon any travel plans to other parts of South Africa and other African countries. For example if going on a Safari in Kruger National Park you would require Malaria tablets whilst there. Immunization against yellow fever, Cholera and anti-malaria prevention medication are recommended if volunteering in Kenya. **Please consult your GP well in advance of your departure date to discuss these requirements.**

All volunteers will be required to hold an appropriate level of travel and health insurance covering the duration of the volunteer service.

How do I get to my destination?

In South Africa all four organisations are situated closest to the Durban and Pietermaritzburg airports. International flights from Australia are generally to Johannesburg with connecting flights from the Johannesburg domestic terminal. Travel arrangements to the organisations from the airport will need to be negotiated prior to departure from Australia.

Other Helpful Information

For longer-term volunteers, continued access to a bank account at home may be the best way to manage finances. Without being a South African or Kenyan resident, it can be very difficult to open a bank account. Keep in mind that access to ATM's and credit card facilities may be difficult at times. Internet access is generally available in larger towns however if placed in a rural area regular internet availability may be difficult. Phone service is generally very good in both city and rural areas.

Volunteers need to be respectful of the values and standards set by the organisations they are working for. If you would like to volunteer then please fill out an application form. On receipt of this form you will be contacted by the volunteer committee to arrange a face-to-face interview.

What if I want to know more?

We hope this answers most of your questions. To apply and to find out more about volunteering please contact us here at the African AIDS Foundation.

African AIDS Foundation

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VOLUNTEERS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Complete the Application Form and the Prohibited Employment Declaration and return them to the Volunteer Coordinator. Applications should be submitted at least 6 months before an intended departure date.
- ✓ Attend an interview with the AAF Volunteer Task Group.
- ✓ If successful, begin negotiation with AAF and its partner organisations for an appropriate placement and for orientation.
- ✓ Consult your GP about your medical and vaccine requirements.
- ✓ Apply for a Passport through your local Post Office (if you don't have one), and/or the Unpaid Volunteer Visa through the South African High Commission or Kenyan High Commission.
- ✓ Confirm details for placement and organise travel arrangements (flights etc).
- ✓ Organise adequate travel and health insurance. Provide a copy to AAF.
- ✓ Liaise directly with the selected organisation about arrival, departure and accommodation requirements.
- ✓ Finalise all details with AAF Volunteer Coordinator.
- ✓ Fly out of Sydney for the experience of a lifetime!