PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Each volunteer brings a different set of skills, knowledge and values to the programme. Therefore, the role of your volunteer placement will largely be decided after your arrival and consultation with Nakavango. We appreciate the time and money you have chosen to invest in this programme, and we hope it will be as rewarding and satisfying for you as it will be for the people you help. The placement will not always be easy. It will challenge and test you, but this is all part of the volunteer experience in a developing country.

While you are volunteering in Victoria Falls, remember that you are a representative of your family; friends; country; Nakavango; and, most importantly, yourself. You are a guest here, and it is important to keep in mind that the people, traditions, cultures, and general way of life will be different from those of your home country. Do not try to force your ways on the people you will be working and living with. Instead, be open-minded and embrace the new cultures you will be exposed to (both those of Zimbabweans and of your fellow volunteers). This will allow you to have a rich and authentic experience.

Volunteer Requirements:

- Volunteers must be over 18 years of age at the beginning of the programme
- Volunteers must present a recent criminal background check to the Operations Manager at orientation
- Fluency in English is required to participate in the programme as all staff members speak English

Criminal Background Check

To participate in the programme, all volunteers are required to provide a criminal background check at orientation. A basic disclosure check from your local police is sufficient and can be obtained by visiting or contacting your local police department. Please ensure you allow sufficient time to acquire this document before you depart from home as processing times vary. A background check is important to determine whether any serious criminal offence has been recorded against your name. The check must be issued within 12 months of your programme start date and is required to be presented in English. If your background check cannot be issued in English, a translated and verified copy will be accepted if presented along with the original. Anyone with a criminal record or caution for other offenses should also contact us before proceeding further.

Location of Programme and Placements

The programme is based in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Volunteers arrive at Victoria Falls International Airport (VFA) and are transported to the Nakavango Conservation Centre on the Stanley & Livingstone Private Game Reserve. Projects are located on the reserve and in rural areas surrounding Victoria Falls town.

Start and Duration of Programmes:

- The Victoria Falls programme begins on the ***first and third Monday*** of every month
- Please be sure to arrive on ***the Sunday before*** your programme starts
- Volunteers can choose to volunteer for periods ranging ***from two to 12 weeks***

Accommodation

Volunteers are accommodated in single rooms at the conservation centre. Being situated on a game reserve, it is not uncommon to see wildlife throughout the day!

The rooms are comfortable and each is equipped with a single bed, ceiling fan, desk, chair, and storage shelving. Bathrooms are shared by up to four volunteers of the same gender, and offer western toilets and hot showers. Bed linen is provided, and during the warmer months, a sheet should be sufficient as there is no air-conditioning in the rooms. During the cooler months, a duvet and warm blanket are provided.

In addition to the sleeping quarters, the accommodation also offers an open-air communal area. There is a swimming pool, braai (barbecue) facility, and picnic tables where volunteers can socialise and enjoy meals. Volunteers must bring their own swimming towels. On-site staff clean the accommodation and common areas throughout the week. However, volunteers are also required to keep these areas tidy.

The conservation centre has a 24-hour security guard, and a safe is available in the office for volunteers to store small valuables. As the reserve is a Big Five area (home to lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and Cape buffalo), the property is protected by an electric fence. Volunteers are required to ask permission before leaving the property.

Laundry

A weekly laundry service is provided for volunteers by the housekeeping staff at the conservation centre. Please ensure that all of your clothing and towels are labelled with your name to ensure that you receive all of your items back in your laundry bag. Laundry bags are provided.

Meals

Volunteers are served three meals a day, except for on weekends when brunch and dinner are served. Fruit, bread and cereal are available all day, and snacks on weekends. All meals are prepared by an on-site chef, and are a mix of western and traditional Zimbabwean food. Breakfast includes cereal, porridge, fruit and toast, accompanied by coffee and tea. Lunches will be a mix of sandwiches, quiches, burgers, salads, and other similar foods. Dinners will commonly comprise of pastas, fish, meat, starches and/or vegetables. Snacks are typically muffins, pastries, or biscuits. The chef is happy to accommodate special dietary requirements (vegetarian, vegan, dairy or gluten free etc.) – please inform the Operations Manager in advance should you have any.

Social Media

Social media provides an excellent platform for our past, present and future volunteers to network with each other. As we are unable to give out individual volunteer details, we manage a number of networks where volunteers can connect with each other before, during, and after their programmes.

Get Recognised For Your Work

Many volunteers choose to share their experiences with their local newspapers and community magazines to inspire others within their community to volunteer abroad. This means we are constantly finding stories about our volunteers in media from all around the world! Some volunteers also chose to use this media coverage to help fundraise for their volunteer placements. If you are interested in gaining recognition for your work and promoting awareness of volunteering abroad, we encourage you to contact your local media outlets that, in our experience, are generally interested in and willing to share our volunteers' stories.