

# Infopack Bethel Caring Academy

Dear volunteer,

This document was written to describe our organisation and give answers to the most common questions for people who come to volunteer with us.

## The project and vision

Bethel Caring Academy is a day-care and preschool organised in the Chaani slum of Mombasa. Our goal is to provide education to children whose financial situation doesn't allow them to pay for it. This project has always been developed through sponsorships and donations. However, to make the Bethel Caring Academy self-sustaining we opened a café whose profits are used to pay for the teachers, supplies and other costs of the project. The day-care and preschool take place in a church hall. We are a Christian community and religion is integral to all our activities.

To keep improving our institution and meet some amenity bills like electricity, water and internet, we request each volunteer to donate \$70 per week on arrival. You are welcome to bring learning materials according to your ability, mostly crayons, manila papers, writing and drawing pads, toys, colours, pens, pencils, pictorial books, tracing books, colour me books, dolls, slides, plastic clays, balls, marbles and many more.

## Your arrival

Whether you arrive by airport or by train or bus, we can arrange a pickup at the cost of \$30. We will ask you to give us the flight number for the purpose of knowing about possible delays. Someone from BCA will pick you up with a taxi, help with changing money and take you to a customer care office to buy a SIM card. This is not mandatory, and you are welcome to arrange a taxi by yourself if that is what you prefer.

## The accommodation

Since the project takes place in the slums, we expect some flexibility from our volunteers.

Our volunteers have a private room adjacent to the church hall. The room is equipped with a double bed (with a mosquito net), a bathroom with a squat toilet and a coffee table and chairs. The door can be locked and no one else will be coming into your room.

The water in the bathroom comes from a borehole. Electricity is stable with an extension cord in your room. There is a good wifi signal in the room. We provide the bedsheets, but you should bring your own towel. We can help with washing the linens as well as your laundry.

## The food

You will be provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner at our café for free. This means typical local dishes that are enjoyed by the local population. The food is mostly vegetarian, with the most common foods being beans, maize and ugali. In case you desire some other food, there is a tourist hotel nearby called Jambo. (we have no affiliation with this establishment)

<http://www.jambovillagehotel.com/index.php/en/>

We drink tap water, but volunteers are advised to buy their own bottled water.

## Getting around

All public transport is provided by private companies- there are taxis, tuk-tuks, matatus (an African minibus) and bodas (motorcycles that take passengers). Bolt and Uber are some of the providers that work in Mombasa and guarantee tourists a safe journey.

To get to the city centre there are established local matatu lines which drive all the time and take 15 minutes to get you there.

## Your behaviour

We expect you to be polite, and to dress modestly. We do not tolerate drugs. Alcohol and cigarettes are permitted, but not around children. The people of Chaani are friendly and kind, they will be delighted to see foreigners and start a conversation. However, after dark (around 7pm) it is not advised to walk around by yourself.

Working with children always asks for special attention. As children are learning English you will interact with them directly, so we expect you to be kind and understanding.

We do not impose our religious practices and we understand if some volunteers choose not to take part.

We are a small community and we expect all problems to be discussed directly with pastor Dennis. You are free to move around, but please let us know what your plans are.

## Expectations

Minimum stay is 2 weeks, maximum 4 months. We expect you to volunteer 5 days a week, but take this with flexibility. The day with the children starts around 8 am.

## How you can help

We would not be here today if we didn't listen to volunteers' advice. Our main limiting factor is always money, but we welcome all ideas and helping hands. We appreciate all games and educational materials you might bring. The majority of education is in English, and children are taught to read and write at BCA. Some examples of activities that we had volunteers help us with are:

1. updating and improving our social media
2. organising fundraising
3. creating activities for the children
4. assisting teachers with daily tasks
5. helping create educational materials by hand
6. organising day trips with the children
7. teaching computer skills
8. Helping at the cafe
9. Your own suggestions and experiences are welcome in expanding this list

## Other tips

Medicines are much cheaper here and no receipt is needed to purchase them. You can start your antimalarials home with one pack and buy the rest here.

Old US dollar bills (before 2006) don't hold the same value as new ones (~25% less). The same goes for bills smaller than a 100 USD

The preferred SIM card company is Safaricom, to register for a SIM card you have to visit a customer care office with your passport.

A popular way of making payments is mpesa, a mobile banking service that is tied to the phone number and is recharged at small shops. It saves you the trouble of carrying cash around.

Money can be taken out of ATMs with a fee of about ~4 USD per transaction.

Nairobi is 5h by train (1000 KSh), 1h by plane (15000 KSh) and 8h by bus (1300 KSH). Mash poa, Dream line, Coast bus are some of the bus companies.

<http://bethelcaringacademy.org/>

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