

# Top 25 Questions and Answers about Volunteering & Internships with STEP Africa



## 1. Who is STEP Africa?

STEP Africa is a private volunteer and internship organization in Northern Tanzania run under German-Tanzanian leadership. Together with our volunteers we run and partner with projects in the fields of **education, childcare, women's rights & community outreach, animal welfare and medicine**. Our entire team is on site to ensure the best possible support for our volunteers and communication with the projects.

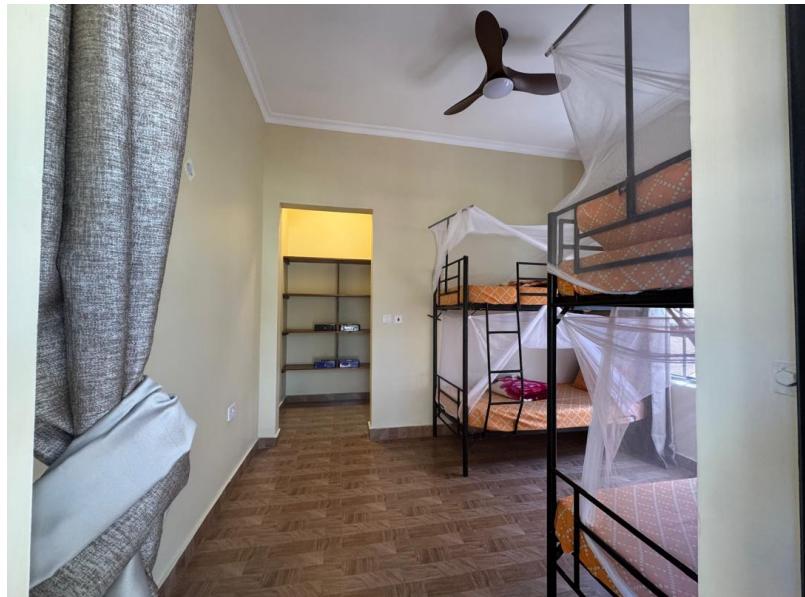
## 2. Where do the projects take place?



All our projects are located in and around the city of Arusha in northern Tanzania, East Africa. Arusha is the third largest city in Tanzania and plays an important role both politically and economically (safari tourism). Many large and small non-governmental organizations have their headquarters in Arusha. Tanzania is considered one of the safest travel

destinations in Africa and is also one of the most beautiful and culturally diverse countries on the African continent.

### 3. How are volunteers and interns accommodated?



The STEP Volunteer Village is located in the quiet neighbourhood of Njiro, only about 10 minutes from the centre of Arusha, and is a small oasis in the bustling African everyday life. All projects are easily accessible from here. The STEP Village offers a large garden, modern rooms and great lounge and relaxation areas. All volunteers stay in this quiet and centrally located accommodation, which has shared rooms as well as private double/twin rooms and single rooms. Each room is equipped with its own bathroom, lockers for valuables, ceiling fans and mosquito nets on the beds. There is a large covered communal area with a kitchen for volunteers, outdoor seating and a large roof terrace with views of Mount Meru and beautiful sunsets. Our

house mamas prepare a typical Tanzanian breakfast and dinner with Western elements during the week. At the weekends, you can cook for yourself or take advantage of the numerous local and Western restaurants in the immediate vicinity. Our team office is located directly in the volunteer village, so there are always contact persons on site.

In addition, there is the option of staying in the modern home of our host mum Salma instead of in the STEP Village.

#### **4. Why Volunteering?**

##### **Meaning and goals of volunteering:**

- Intercultural learning / immersion into a new culture.
- Help and support your project "on a small scale"
- Acting as an ambassador for your project after returning home
- Observe & understand
- Gain personal and professional experience
- STEP Africa placements are recognized by many universities as internships (including nursing placements, clinical traineeships)



## 5. What are the requirements?

- Sufficient knowledge of the English language for communication in everyday life, hostel and project (Swahili knowledge is not a must)
- Understanding of the meaning, goals and limits of volunteering
- High motivation and willingness to work
- Reliability
- Police clearance certificate
- Minimum age 17 years (with declaration of consent of the custodians)
- Minimum duration of stay 2 weeks

## 6. Which projects does STEP Africa work with?

We work with smaller organizations/NGOs, institutions and clinics in Arusha. These include daycare centers for children, schools, hospitals, women's rights organizations and animal welfare projects. We also run a community outreach program under the coordination of our own social worker as well as our very own baby and toddler daycare. We make sure that the projects make a meaningful contribution to the development of Tanzania and value the holistic understanding of volunteering as much as we do.

More information about our current projects can be found at <https://step-africa.com/volunteering/>.

## 7. How are the projects additionally supported?

We encourage our volunteers to raise additional funds for their projects and provide advice and support. In addition, we repeatedly support our projects financially from parts of our income. The team members of STEP Africa also often take on an advisory role in the projects due to their many years of experience.

Since STEP Africa was founded in 2014, a dozen registered associations have already been established in Germany and other European countries. Founded by our former volunteers, who have made an important contribution to the long-term and sustainable promotion of our partner projects.

## 8. Who does volunteer work with STEP Africa?

Many of our students are pupils, high school graduates, trainees or students. However, we also often have professionals and pensioners with us who support our projects for a few weeks or months.

Many of our volunteers come from German-speaking countries, i.e. Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland, but we are increasingly receiving volunteers from Europe, North America, Asia, Australia and other African countries – so basically from all over the world.

In Arusha, there is a large international volunteer community.

## 9. How much does volunteering with STEP Africa cost?

As a volunteer / intern you pay a one-time application fee of 200€, which covers project placement, preparation, airport transfers, orientation and project support. We then charge a program fee of 130€/week for accommodation in our volunteer house (dormitory), meals from Monday to Friday and supervision by our whole team here in Arusha. For a 4-week stay, for example, you would pay 200€ application fee and 520€ program fee to us (total: 720€). For accommodation in a single room (225€ / week), double / twin room (180€ / week) or in a host family (180 € / week) the weekly fee will be adjusted accordingly.

Volunteers in the medical field also pay a mandatory donation of approximately \$200 per month, which goes directly to the clinics and is used to cover running costs. Animal welfare volunteers are asked for a minimum donation of \$100 (\$25 for each week after the 5th week).

In addition, there are costs for flights (from about 800€ both ways), visa (from \$50, see below) as well as health insurance (from 10€ per month) and, if necessary, travel vaccinations.

It is always difficult for us to give a guideline for pocket money as this depends very much on personal interests. However, you can calculate an approximate amount of 50€-70€ per week for bus rides (approx. 20 cents

per one-way trip), weekend meals (from 1€ in a restaurant) and daily necessities. If you would like to go on a safari or other tour, you should set an additional budget for this aside.

## 10. Which visa do i need?

Visa regulations in Tanzania are quite complicated and can change frequently. Currently, our volunteers enter with an Ordinary Visa for "humanitarian and charity activities" or a "Student Visa". This costs US-\$ 50 and should be applied for directly at the airport or at a land border. US-citizens can only apply for a multiple entry visa which costs \$100. Should there be any changes in the visa regulations during the preparation period, we will of course keep our volunteers updated. The visa can be extended once, allowing a maximum stay of 6 months. The extension costs \$250.

We take care of the entire organization of the visa extension in cooperation with the immigration office in Arusha. You need an international passport, which should be valid for at least 6 months beyond your stay.

## 11. Are there fixed arrival and departure times?

Yes, **arrival days are Thursdays** so you should book your flights accordingly. Orientation days take place every Friday, so that the weekend

can be used for resting and acclimatization, before the first day of the project on Monday.

Departures should take place on Wednesdays. Volunteers who would prefer to arrive on a different day of the week (than Thursday) should look for an alternative accommodation in Arusha for the first few days or contact us individually. By having a fixed arrival day we would like to avoid unnecessary stress in our accommodation due to daily changes and therefore give all volunteers more peace and a chance to get to know each other better.

### **12. Which airport do i have to book my flight to?**

Ideally, you book your flight to Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO). We can pick you up there at any time of the day (or night). You can also plan your flight to Arusha Airport, but as this is only a small national airport, flights to there are usually more expensive and involve several transfers.

### **13. When should I register at the latest?**

As we only have limited places available in our volunteer houses and also in the projects we recommend that you apply at least 3 months in advance. This gives you enough time to prepare for your stay. Applications at shorter notice are also possible but subject to availability.

## 14. What are the maximum and minimum stays?

The minimum length of stay is 2 weeks. Due to visa requirements, volunteers can stay in Tanzania for a maximum of 6 months (180 days).

## 15. How does the application process work?

If you have decided to participate in the STEP Africa Volunteer Program, the first step will be to fill out our online application form (<https://step-africa.com/apply-now/>). After your application has been approved, you will receive your official confirmation from us within two working days. As soon as you have transferred your application fee the stay is confirmed.

We will then give you access to our online volunteer area, where you can download our detailed volunteer guidebook and find many more useful information to prepare for your stay in Arusha. We will then reserve a bed for you in our volunteer house or, if you wish, in a host family and start planning your project.

In addition to your application, we need your curriculum vitae (CV) with a photo as a PDF document. We also need a certificate of good conduct from the police / an extract from the criminal record for all volunteers regardless of the project they have chosen. Volunteers under the age of 18 should also have to send us a written declaration of consent from their parents/guardians.

### 16. Can I choose my project?

Yes, of course! We always try to listen to our volunteers' wishes when allocating the projects. If there are no more volunteer positions open in the desired project for the intended assignment period, we continue to search until both - volunteer and project - are happy with the decision.

### 17. Can I combine two or more projects?

Many of our volunteers divide their time between two or more projects in order to get an insight into different fields of work. We do not charge additional fees for project combinations.

### 18. How many working hours per day are the norm? How about vacation days?

Not all projects have fixed working hours. You can therefore often decide whether you want to work part-time (approx. 4-5 hours a day) or full-time (7-8 hours a day). Universities usually require full-time work for internships, so ideally you should gather the necessary information about any requirements from your school or university beforehand. At the beginning of your stay, your working hours will be determined in consultation with your project. The animal welfare project has a shift plan, which also includes weekends.

In most projects, weekends are free or work on these days is not obligatory. So there is plenty of time for activities.

You are also welcome to go on trips of several days' duration, provided you discuss this with your project in advance. In general, however, you should interrupt your work as little as possible and plan longer trips before or after the end of your project.

#### **19. What vaccinations do I need? Malaria-Prophylaxis yes or no?**

Some travel vaccinations such as typhoid, meningitis, yellow fever and hepatitis A and B are recommended for a stay in Tanzania, in addition to the basic vaccinations. A rabies vaccination should be considered compulsory when working at the animal shelter. The yellow fever vaccination is required if you want to visit the island of Zanzibar or enter Tanzania via neighboring countries such as Kenya, which are considered risk areas. Only recognized yellow fever vaccination centers can usually administer the vaccination.

Malaria prophylaxis can also be useful under certain circumstances. Note, however, that even the best chemoprophylaxis can never provide 100% protection and the risk of malaria in Arusha is generally low. The most important thing is effective protection against bites!

After registration at STEP Africa, one of your first steps should be to go to an experienced tropical doctor, who can advise you individually on your

travel situation and health history.

## 20. Is life safe as a foreigner in Arusha?

The situation in Tanzania and Arusha in particular is politically very stable. Of course, in this day and age, no place in the world can be 100% safe from e.g. a terrorist attack but the situation in Arusha is also very relaxed as far as religious conflicts are concerned. In Arusha, Christians and Muslims live peacefully side by side and with each other, and conflicts are extremely rare. In addition, the crime rate is significantly lower than, for example, in other African cities. During the day one can move freely. Pickpocketing occurs in places such as the market, but can be prevented if you take good care of your belongings. After dark, it is not advisable to walk around. The streets are poorly lit and robberies are unfortunately more likely. Nevertheless, even as a European you do not have to worry about living in Arusha. All our projects are easy to reach and would not be chosen by us if the way to get there was not safe. We also give our new volunteers a detailed orientation day, which also includes the topic of safety.

Our main argument is usually the fact that we ourselves live in Arusha with our families and would not do so if we did not feel absolutely safe!

## 21. Can I work as a volunteer without specific qualification?

Yes! Much more important than a certain qualification are motivation,

creativity and the willingness to get involved in a completely new culture and way of life. Volunteers are not professionally qualified development workers, but rather "normal people" who want to support their project and learn a lot from the people in Tanzania.

## 22. Can I really make a difference as a volunteer? Will I be needed in the projects? Am I not replacing local workers?

All our projects accept volunteers as **additional helpers**, which means volunteers are not there to replace local workers. Volunteering should be seen as much more than just active support on the ground. As a volunteer, you have the unique opportunity to see how aid work "works" in a developing country in order to gain a more differentiated and, above all, a realistic picture. Volunteering means to see with your own eyes, to learn and to understand and to actively participate in an intercultural exchange.

As a former volunteer, you also act as an ambassador and can tell your family and friends about your experience and "your" project. This can even lead to a long-term partnership and support for the project long after you return home.

## 23. How can I prepare for my project?

Of course, this depends very much on your final project. We have created

profiles for each of our projects, which we try to keep them as up to date as possible. This will give you some idea of what to expect during your assignment there. This way you can get to know your tasks in advance and, with our help perhaps even develop concrete ideas beforehand. Even if you want to bring something to your project, e.g. a donation in kind, such as used children's clothes or books, we will gladly give you tips and ideas, so that in the end you can actually bring something that will be useful for your project. However, it is also very important that you are spontaneous and get prepared that sometimes it all comes different than you expected.

## 24. What can I do as a volunteer in Tanzania in my free-time?

Tanzania is considered one of the most beautiful travel destinations in Africa. In your free time there are many beautiful places to discover. In and around Arusha there are numerous hotels with swimming pools that you can use for a small fee, yoga classes, small cafes and restaurants, museums, snake parks, lodges and hiking groups. There are also and diverse markets to explore (e.g. fabric market or second hand second-hand market) or you can get involved in the legendary music and dance scene in various bars and nightclubs.

We organize tours to the hot springs, waterfalls, coffee tours and a Maasai village. The absolute highlight is of course a safari. STEP Africa organises tours to all northern national parks and of varying length. The safari participants are made up

of our volunteers and sometimes also their friends and family members. By travelling in a group, the costs are kept as low as possible. Also, we usually have groups per month, so there is something for everyone! something suitable for everyone! We also organize climbs to the roof of guides to climb the roof of Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro, as well as its little brother its little brother Mount Meru.

## 25. Who are my persons of contact?

We have several permanent contacts who are always there for you! These are Volunteer supervisors Hilda, volunteer support Naboths and volunteer supervisor Magdalena from Austria. We are absolute insiders and will help you find your way around everyday life and find your way around.

Kira, as the director, is mainly responsible for all organizational matters "behind the scenes" but also always happy to help. Kira is German and was a volunteer herself during her first stay in Tanzania in 2008. Also our manager Upendo is here for you whenever you need an open ear or helping hand!

You can find more information and pictures on our homepage, which, like this information sheet, is kept up to date on a regular basis.

## Contact Details

**Homepage:** [www.step-africa.com](http://www.step-africa.com)

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**We are looking forward to welcome you in Tanzania soon!**

