Welcome to World Youth International’s Overseas Service Program in Kenya.

The Overseas Service Program is an individual volunteer placement in Kenya. This program will empower you to make a difference.

We trust that your queries will be covered in this document but if there are further questions, please email us at admin@worldyouth.org.au or call us on 08 8340 1266.

For information on fees and dates visit our website www.worldyouth.org.au.
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Kenya is located on the East Coast of Africa with the Equator running almost straight through the middle of the country. It is a sovereign state, having achieved political independence from British rule on 12 December 1963 and become a fully-fledged Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations one year later on 12 December 1964. The country shares common borders with Somalia (north east), Ethiopia (north), Sudan (north-west), Uganda (west) and Tanzania (south). To the south east lies the Great Indian Ocean, making the country the marine gateway to East Africa.

Kenya is a land of scenic splendours, magnificent fauna and flora, enjoyable climatic conditions and rich cultural values. It is blessed with a great variety of natural wonders: from the azure blue waters of the Indian Ocean, to the sun-drenched silver sand beaches, through the wild Savanna woodlands to the deserts of Northern Province, and the Montane forests of central Kenya right across to the shores of the second largest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Victoria. Kenya also hosts the second highest snow-capped mountain in Africa, Mt. Kenya, which rises to 5,199 metres and is the only location in the world where snow can be found on the Equator.

Kenya is a multi-racial society with more than 40 indigenous tribes and other ethnic communities. While no ethnic group constitutes a majority of Kenya’s citizens, the five largest tribal groups – Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba and Kalenjin – account for about 70 per cent of the population.

Kenya is a very conservative country with regards to socially acceptable behaviours, dress and presentation. The majority of Kenyans identify as Christian though there is also a strong Islamic following, particularly in the coastal regions. Many different denominations of Christianity exist in Kenya and people take their faith very seriously. Tribal beliefs are slowly petering out and very few traditional tribes continue to reside in the country today.

The state of health in Kenya requires significant improvement. Infectious respiratory diseases and malaria account for the majority of illnesses and deaths in the country, while tuberculosis, dysentery, and parasitic and venereal diseases are common occurrences. HIV/AIDS continues to have a devastating impact with three in five people infected with the HIV virus in many rural locations.

Many illnesses in Kenya are transmitted by insects and animals, and by the use of contaminated water for washing and drinking. The situation is compounded by a lack of understanding of sanitary principles, by malnutrition and by HIV/AIDS. Despite major achievements in the health sector, there is still a lot to be desired. Weak policies, inadequately trained health workers, weak management and poor leadership in most public health facilities are largely to blame.

Gender inequality is a stark reality in Kenya. Simply put, women are generally perceived as second-rate citizens with fewer rights and freedoms than men. The traditional belief that women exist to serve, procreate, cook and clean runs deep, even among women and the younger generations. It is not unusual to hear of, or see, women being abused by their husbands, and male infidelity is a common occurrence. Progress is slowly being made, however, as groups supporting women’s empowerment and self-sufficiency are being established around Kenya every day.
Program Inclusions and Exclusions

Your program fee includes:

- One-way flight from Nairobi to Kisumu
- Airport transfers
- All accommodation
- In-country transport
- A three-day orientation and sightseeing program held in Kisumu
- An allowance for community projects
- Swahili or Luo language lessons
- Utility allowances
- 24 hour guidance and support provided by experienced local staff
- Entry to the Personal Empowerment Program (a four-day program held annually in Adelaide)
- WYI polo shirt and ‘You Are Amazing’ book
- WYI Step Out membership
- Contribution towards the sustainable growth of WYI which supports our work in developing countries
- Accredited TESOL course (Teaching Program only)

Your program fee does not include:

(all costs listed are a guideline only)

Air Travel, Taxes and Travel Insurance
You are required to organise your own airfares to the nominated destination point. Travel insurance is compulsory for all programs. Contact WYI for our recommended travel agent and insurance company.

Vaccinations
As WYI is not a registered medical organisation, we can only direct you to www.tmvc.com.au (Travel Doctor) or www.drsref.com.au/travel.html for country-specific advice and general travel health tips.

Visas
You are required to enter Kenya on a tourist visa. WYI will provide you with the necessary forms and guide you through the process.

Police Check
You are required to provide a current National Police Clearance Certificate. Please visit your local police station and request the appropriate forms.

Medical Examination
With the assistance of your regular doctor, you are required to complete and submit our medical examination form prior to your departure.

Personal Items
You must supply your own clothing, travel equipment, toiletries and personal entertainment (eg. books, iPod, magazines, etc.)

Spending Money
You will require personal spending money for souvenirs, phones and SIM cards, toiletries you may require, and any snacks or drinks outside of what WYI provides (eg. chocolate bars, energy/alcoholic drinks, junk food, etc.)

First Aid Kit
A First Aid Kit will be supplied to your team throughout the program, however antibiotics and other medications will not be provided. We encourage you to visit a Travel Doctor or GP to fill your own First Aid Kit with personal medications to suit you.

Transport
Transport to Adelaide for the four-day Personal Empowerment Program.
Standard Program Itinerary

World Youth International requires all volunteers to arrive in Nairobi on the advertised commencement date of each month so that orientation can begin effectively. Although programs vary depending on the style of placement undertaken, itineraries are based on a structure similar to that outlined below. This example is based on a standard 3-month placement.

WYI requires all volunteers to arrive in Nairobi on the second Wednesday of the month in order to begin their placement in Kenya. Although programs do vary depending on what style of placement you wish to undertake, your itinerary will be based on a structure similar to the layout below.

This example is based on a standard 3 month placement.

Day 1
Upon arrival at Nairobi International Airport, you will transfer to the domestic airport where you will catch your flight to Kisumu. If you arrive after 4pm, WYI will arrange for overnight accommodation and return transfers on your behalf. These expenses will be covered by your program fee. You will be collected from the airport in Kisumu and transferred to your hotel accommodation in central Kisumu. There is a possibility that there will be other volunteers starting at the same time as you.

Day 2-4
An all-inclusive three day orientation program will be conducted in Kisumu, combining cultural talks, sightseeing activities and general familiarization. After two nights in Kisumu, you will transfer to the community where you will be based for the remainder of your time in Kenya.

Day 5-10
You will have the opportunity to meet the locals and orientate yourself around the community. The In Country Coordinator will introduce you to the coordinators of the placements available to you so that you can decide where your skills and experiences are best suited and where you would like to spend your time.

As WYI placements are very independent, planning your weekly schedule can take time and it is something you don’t want to rush. Spending time with existing volunteers at their placements allows you to see the placement in greater depth. Volunteers can choose one or more placements.

Day 11 – 85
Programs from this point forward will vary from volunteer to volunteer. There is a lot of flexibility with these programs and you are able to set your own rest days, travel when the opportunity presents itself and take time out to recharge the batteries. Volunteers are expected to work five days per week. Generally weekends are free for trips to surrounding areas, and into Kisumu for emailing, banking and major food shopping trips.

Your fellow volunteers will become your family and you will find that every 4-6 weeks you will need to take some time out to explore and relax!

Simply work with your In Country Coordinator and community organisation to plan your trips well in advance so all placements are well informed. Saying goodbye to peers and your extended Kenyan family is without a doubt the hardest part of this program. A farewell celebration will be arranged for you along with a program debrief before you leave the community.

Day 86
After completing your community placement, you will spend the night at your hotel in Kisumu. By this stage, you will most likely have a strong network of friends in Kisumu as well so it will be a busy afternoon/evening for you!

Day 87
You will travel back to Nairobi by tourist coach which will take approximately 7-8 hours. You will travel through the Great Rift Valley and past Lake Naivasha. Keep your eyes open for an array of wildlife! You will spend the night in Nairobi.

Day 88 - 90
Once in Nairobi, you will have the option of participating in a safari at an extra cost. This safari is to be organised by you with the help of our In Country Coordinator at the beginning of your program.

If you choose this option, our partners Prime Time Safari’s will conduct your all inclusive 3 day, 2 night safari to the Masai Mara. After this, you will return to Nairobi mid afternoon and then have another night’s accommodation included. You may want to align your safari with your departure dates or you can plan it for any time during your placement by communicating with your In Country Coordinator. After this, your Overseas Service Program, is officially complete!

Is there an option to stay on in Kenya after my program has completed?

All volunteers travel to Kenya on a tourist visa and you are able to stay there for up to 6 months. If you enrol on a short term placement (ie 1 month) and then decide that you would like to stay on, you will need to contact WYI Australia immediately to determine if that will be possible or not. In most cases, there will be no problems with staying on but occasionally our village placements are booked out well in advance and there is no remaining accommodation.
Adventure Activities

Fantastic 3 day Maasai Mara safari adventure, animals and culture.

The Optional Adventure Package at the end of your program is highly recommended and a great way to complete your time in Kenya. It allows you to take time out, relax and enjoy the natural beauty of Kenya after so many weeks of hard work!

In conjunction with a qualified safari agent in Kenya, WYI offers you the chance to participate on a three day, all-inclusive safari through the Masai Mara Game Reserve. Masai Mara is arguably Kenya’s most popular game sanctuary where many varieties of wildlife can be viewed. Elephants, giraffes, lions, wildebeest, hyenas, zebras, cheetahs, leopards, gazelles, impala, buffalo and more than four hundred bird species call this picturesque sanctuary home.

The Adventure Package is run separately from WYI Australia and is completely optional, so the cost is not included in the Overseas Service Program fee.

Fundraising

Do you want to participate on one of our overseas volunteer programs but are restricted financially?

Perhaps you should consider fundraising! Get a group of friends together and organise an event such as a movie night or a garage sale. Or, ask local businesses or Rotary Clubs for donations. All money you raise can then be put towards your program fee or project. This method has been very successful in the past with some participants managing to fundraise their entire program fee, plus more.

If you choose to fundraise, WYI will provide you with a full Fundraising Kit that includes tax deductible receipts, ideas, terms and conditions, an authorization card, plus handy hints & tips!

As well as being able to fundraise to cover the cost of your program fee you also have the option of using your fundraised money for In Country Projects.

Having extra funds available to you in country will add enormous potential to what you can achieve on your placement! You may be able to run a mobile medical clinic in Kenya or install a rainwater tank at a local community centre in Peru: the options are endless!

Tax Deductible Donations:
Any donations that are made to your fundraising efforts are fully tax deductible. WYI will provide you with a receipt book so you can issue tax deductible receipts. Rally your friends, corporate groups, work colleges, and contacts to make a donation to your campaign!

Please note: ‘donation’ means the donator receives nothing in return - for example, if you are selling tickets to an event, this is not tax deductible.

Please contact the office on (08) 8340 1266 for more information on how you could fundraise!
Testimonial

My life in Odede
- Emily Pedler

How to summarise my life in the beautiful village of Odede?

Kenyan are amazing people. They are so kind, welcoming, incredibly generous, and extremely humble, as well as the Luo being a very proud people. From when I first got off the plane in Kisumu from Aus, I had people calling out ‘Welcome to Kenya’. My friends and even complete strangers have welcomed me to their homes, fed me, talked with me, introduced me to their families, walked with me, laughed with me, and cried with me. Much more laughing than crying I can assure you!

I’ve been working lots with the youth group, which is a group of half a dozen dedicated young people in their 20s. They have put together a number of project proposals which I’m assisting them in kicking off.

One is the construction of ecosanitation toilets, which we have at the centre where I live. Very few people have any form of toilet, which normally consists of a pit latrine shared between a compound (usually about 4 families live in each compound). The majority who don’t have pit latrines just do their business behind a bush or on the side of a road. The lack of sanitation infrastructure is a huge reason for why Lake Victoria is so polluted, and leads to extremely high levels of diseases like typhoid and amoeba.

Another project is the development of a tree nursery. The average family uses about 39 trees per year for fuel in the form of charcoal, which is used in cooking every meal. Very few people who I’ve spoken to plant trees and those who have, have only planted about 5 trees over the past few years. This is obviously not sustainable and locals say that they have experienced a dramatic drop in rainfall over the last few years, predominantly due to deforestation. This has a direct impact on their agricultural harvests, which has been steadily depleting over the last few years. So the youth have planted their first seeds and have got more on the way. They are go-getters!

Life in Odede has such a beautiful quality to it that I think we miss out on in Australia. Or maybe we had it at one stage, but it got lost somewhere in our endless search for income and material possessions. I know I’m going to try very hard to rediscover that quality when we come back to Aus.

Dancing stone sober in the middle of the day, singing while working, always laughing at the small things, and the big things, walking around holding hands with friends, males or females (yes males holding hands as well... just the ability to reach out physically in comfort and friendship to other people is something that Kenyans do much more openly and freer than us), singing, whooping, dancing - and clapping in meetings, not being obsessed with time, letting the unimportant things be unimportant things... just to name a few.

So yes, it’s been by far the most enriching experience I’ve ever had. I’ve learnt sooooooo much and can’t wait to work out what I’m going to do next with everything I’ve learnt.

I know I’ve said it before, that there is so much strength here. So much strength and so much opportunity. There is so much power in every person I’ve met here, and when they all work together which they’re doing, it is truly incredible. I am so fortunate to be here and to be a part of this community and their achievements. This is true community empowerment and true community ownership.
Frequently Asked Questions

How old do I need to be?
You must be a minimum age of 18 years of age to participate on WYI’s Overseas Service Program in Kenya. There is no maximum age limit for this program however all participants must be medically fit and undergo a medical clearance in the lead up to their departure. A good level of fitness is highly recommended.

Do I need any qualifications?
Dependant on the style of placement you wish to undertake, there are no formal qualifications required for a Community Placement. Participants wishing to apply for the OSP Professional program must possess the relevant qualifications.

What is the selection criteria?
WYI is looking for participants who are flexible, resilient, have a good state of health and have great communication skills. The nature of the Overseas Service Program is highly self-directed so a high level of independence and initiative is necessary. Applicants will be notified of their suitability for the Kenya Overseas Service Program at the conclusion of their phone call. WYI will refund your application fee, should your application be deemed unsuccessful.

What will my living arrangements be?
During your orientation, you will stay in a basic but comfortable hotel in the Western Kenyan city of Kisumu. During your village placement, you will be placed in a share house where you will live with your fellow volunteers within the local community. You will always have your own private room which contains a single bed with bedding and mosquito net, desk, chair and somewhere to place your clothes. This will be furnished, rental accommodation that is very basic and contains very few facilities. Although this takes a little while to adjust to, living in the heart of a community is far more rewarding than living in a hotel and commuting daily to your project.

What sort of food will I be eating?
During your orientation, you will be eating most meals at local cafes and restaurants in Kisumu. When in the villages, you will shop locally at the markets and volunteers often team up taking turns in preparing meals for the rest of the group. It is most likely that you will take regular trips to Kisumu to stock up on major food items. Meals will consist of rice, beans, fruits and vegetables. Generally, meat, chicken and fish is avoided where possible as it does increase your risk of illness.

What areas of Kenya do I travel to?
Your program will involve travel to both Nairobi and Western Kenya. After your commencement in Nairobi, you will fly to Kisumu, Kenya’s third largest city. Kisumu is located on the shore of Lake Victoria, and your village placement in Yala is just over a hours drive from Kisumu.
Frequently Asked Questions

When should I apply for a position on the OSP?
WYI recommends that you apply at least 6 – 9 months prior to the commencement date. Your financial contribution to WYI may take time to accumulate and therefore advanced planning is strongly recommended. We will accept applications up until 60 days prior to program commencement.

Can I travel with my partner, friends or family?
Yes, yes and yes!
You can travel and work with your friends on these programs. We have always opened this program to people in relationship as we believe that travelling with a partner creates a solid support structure allowing you to often achieve greater results. We guarantee that you will be placed together in the same village.

Over the years, we have created programs for many families who have travelled, worked and lived together. Children must be 10 years of age or older to travel on our programs due to health, hygiene and safety concerns in developing countries. Special family rates are offered so be sure to ask one of our staff about our packages.

Is my program fee tax deductible?
All donations to WYI and most donations towards your program fee are also tax deductible.
ATO tax legislation stipulates that DGR status does not extend to our participants. Any contributions that come from you, your immediate family members, or money raised through general fundraising activities where donors receive goods or services in return for their contributions (such as trivia nights, chocolate drives, raffles or movie nights) are not tax deductible. All other contributions are tax deductible.

How safe am I in Kenya? Are there risks I should be aware of?
WYI has been working in Kenya since 1992 and has sent thousands of people to work as volunteers. Our approach to your placement ensures that any risk to you is minimized.
Nairobi and the majority of cities within Kenya are considered to be quite dangerous and we aim to avoid these areas as much as possible. Major tourist cities including Mombassa are considered to be high risk destinations and travel within North Eastern Kenya is strictly forbidden.

All WYI placements are in North Western Kenya. Very few tourists travel to these regions and the few people you do meet are generally volunteer aid workers. In most cases, volunteers are highly respected and are held in high esteem within the local communities. All volunteers are placed in rural villages in close proximity the city of Kisumu. Crime rates are extremely low and families are generally subsistence farmers. They are grateful for development assistance and understand that this can only happen if volunteers are kept safe and secure. WYI does have comprehensive Risk Management Plan for each country which is distributed to you prior to your departure. Team leaders and in country staff constantly review and update safety and security measures and will give you an overview during your orientation. Although many villages do not have electricity or basic services, they all have mobile phone coverage so it is compulsory that you take your mobile phone with you. You can purchase a sim card and top up phone cards in Kisumu during your orientation. Family, friends and WYI will be able to keep in regular contact with you and you won’t need international roaming as you will have a local number.

Why choose World Youth International?
WYI has been offering volunteer placements since 1988 and is proudly a not-for-profit, non-religious and non-political Australian-based organisation. We have sent thousands of volunteers across the globe and have had no major injuries, accidents or deaths on any of our programs. WYI is an approved charity, a signatory to ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) and AusAID approved. We have flourished as an organisation through word of mouth and we rely on our volunteers to share their experiences and outcomes with their peers.

Why do you offer only a limited amount of countries to volunteer in?
At World Youth International, we focus on quality and not quantity. We ensure that our destinations provide our participants with the greatest possible volunteering experience. We have worked in countries like Nepal and Kenya since 1992 and have a large network of strategic local and international partners. This allows WYI to offer a range of placements options to you and focus more of our efforts into making your experience a success.

If your question has not been addressed, please feel free to contact one of our office representatives on 08 8340 1266.
Application Procedure

You can reserve a position on our Overseas Service Program in Kenya by applying online now at www.worldyouth.org.au, or by downloading an application form and submitting it to our office at:

World Youth International
PO Box 25, Hindmarsh SA 5007

Our staff will process your application and contact you by phone within three days. You will be required to complete a short Online Interview Form before receiving a personalised, 45 minute information session from the Overseas Service Program Coordinator.

This will be conducted by phone unless you live in Adelaide and are able to visit us in the office. The intention of the call will be to assess your suitability, establish a relationship with you, provide you with information about the program and address any of your immediate questions.

Applicants will be notified of their suitability for the program at the conclusion of this call.

If you have any questions before submitting your application, please do not hesitate to contact us at the office on 08 8340 1266 or email admin@worldyouth.org.au.

Research Links

Kenya Country Information and News
www.trust.org/alertnet
www.worldbank.org
www.who.int/countries/ken/en

Kenyan High Commission
www.kenya.asn.au

First Aid and Medical Sites
www.tmvc.com.au
www.stjohn.org.au

Tourism
www.go2africa.com/kenya
www.lonelyplanet.com/kenya
www.magicalkenya.com

Travel Advice
www.smartraveller.gov.au

World Youth International Facebook Group
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4753488502

World Youth International Facebook Page
http://www.facebook.com/WYIHome