

About Pamoja International Voluntary Services (PIVS)

Q) For how many years has PIVS operated international volunteer programs?

A) PIVS has operated international volunteer programs since 2002.

Q) Why volunteer at PIVS?

A) Our volunteer programs are organized in a unique African way of life, Volunteers get first hand experience by working/volunteering with the local organization, learn the ways and life of local community, in this process they get fully integrated in their volunteer program. PIVS offers both short and long term opportunities to volunteers and variety of projects for volunteers to participate, whereas other organization offer only short term opportunities or long term opportunities. Also, PIVS is a local NGO operated and managed by experienced and qualified young people. As an independent organization our volunteer(s) work is matched to the needs of the community, local people, and partner organizations with whom we work.

Q) In what areas can a volunteer participate?

A) PIVS has two programs:- International Work Camp Program which runs for 2 weeks and 3 weeks and mid and Long term Program which runs for 1 6 months. Volunteers can participate in the following activities/projects animation, social work, construction, renovation, manual work, ecology, environment, agriculture, environment, gender issues, micro finance, teaching in Schools, volunteering in Hospitals, wildlife, volunteering in Human rights and Justice Institutions among others

Q) Is PIVS affiliated with any other international or non-profit organizations?

A) PIVS is a member of Co-ordinating Committee of International Voluntary Services (CCIVS), Eastern Africa Work Camps Association Network (EAWA) and PIVS has working relationships with organizations in Canada, Italy and Germany.

Q) How do you ensure that a participant benefits from international work camp programs?

A) The volunteers are fully integrated in this program once they begin, through an orientation session where they are introduced to the project by our qualified staff, given an opportunity to volunteer in the project, to learn about the local culture, take part in cultural activities, leisure activity, and the same time making contribution to the local community. It is important volunteer understand the social context where the work camp is based as only in that way there will be a real interaction with the community and understanding of their work. Work camps provide an opportunity to explore the potential of an international group living together, to work, to have fun, to spark community interaction.

Q) How do you ensure that a participant benefits from a mid and Long term international volunteer program?

Mid and long term volunteer program is designed for volunteers who have knowledge, expertise and experience in a particular subject to further their knowledge or get a practical first hand experience in a particular field. The volunteers work/volunteer closely with the staff of that particular project. This program also caters for volunteers with no particular background knowledge or experience by experimental learning. This program offers volunteer enough time to get fully immersed in the specific project they are undertaking.

Q) How do you ensure that the community benefits from International work camp program?

A) First of all the volunteer is familiarized/ oriented about the project, the volunteer actively participates in the community work and dedicates him/herself in the project, we monitor and evaluate

the volunteer impact towards the community initiative. On the other hand this program helps to broaden the perspective of the local people.

Q) What is the difference between PIVS volunteer programs and "volunteer holidays"?

A) Our Volunteer programs are programs designed for people who want really to learn, share and get actively involved in community development projects. It is not touring a particular area or cheap holiday but rather integrating oneself in the local community.

Q) What age groups and nationalities do your programs attract?

A) We invite participants/volunteers aged 18 years and above from all around the world.

Q) How can I talk with someone in person about volunteering abroad with PIVS?

A) PIVS can give you contacts of some of our past volunteers who have participated in our programs.

Q) What are the qualifications of PIVS staff?

A) PIVS staff is composed of young dedicated professionals who have worked in community development work, social work and youth programs. In addition our staffs have worked in other organizations in facilitating youth exchange programs in other countries, in addition we have part-time volunteer consultants who assist to develop systems that improve relations and services to our volunteers.

Q) What are the types of accommodations?

A) The accommodations vary from project to project. We have host families where volunteer(s) stay with a family, residential project house, classrooms, Social halls and independent living. PIVS typical housing in case of **host family**: host family offers accommodation, normally live in 2-3 bedroom house, 1 bathroom and 1 toilet You will be placed within a welcoming family setting, and you will have your own room. Our host families are educated, well-respected people who have experience with international volunteers. In addition, most members of the host families speak English. The family will provide the food (breakfast, lunch & dinner) for the volunteer. In case of **residential project** the volunteer is given a room including 3 meals and lives within the project site, all the facilities like bathroom, toilet and kitchen are within the residential project. **Classrooms and social halls** are mostly for international work camp programs when we have a large group, where the volunteers stay together cook, for themselves but we have one of our staff staying with the volunteers. In rural areas where there is no electricity and running water, volunteers use buckets to wash and bath, pit latrine is used, but we make necessary arrangements for volunteers have access to clean water for their use, we use lamps and pressure lamps for lighting. **Independent living** which is not popular volunteer stay alone in rented apartment which is not fully furnished, it is a self contained house i.e. it has electricity if in urban areas, piped and tap water bathroom, toilet and Kitchen. In mid and long term volunteer program volunteer(s) are assisted to cook by the host family, after a while they learn how to cook local food.

Q) What kind of food will there be?

A) Volunteer will eat 3 meals a day i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner in some cases they will be carrying packed lunch depending on the distance between project and where they stay. In all cases volunteers will be eating local food, we do not offer western type of diet. Vegetarians are also catered for. Kenyan foods includes:-"ugali"-a porridge like mash made from corn meal,"chapati"-bread made form wheat flour;"irio"-a mash of corn,beans,greens & potatoes, rice, green bananas, green grams, cow peas, and plenty of fruits and vegetables available

Q) Is the water safe to drink?

A) In all PIVS programs, safe drinking water is provided. Our staff will also inform you about health issues when eating and drinking outside of the PIVS projects.

Q) Can we go out for dinner?

A) Volunteers are always free to independently explore local eating establishments. PIVS staff is available to recommend wonderful, unique restaurants in the community.

Q) Can I bring a friend/colleague with me to volunteer too? Will it be possible for us to stay together?

A) We allow people to come with friends or even in large groups. You may sometimes be placed in different homes, but they may be located within 1 mile away from each other.

. We do our best to accommodate requests however please know that we take into consideration a number of factors, including

- the total number of volunteers
- how many family members there are
- the total capacity at the Home-Base; and
- gender breakdown of the overall volunteer group.

Q) How safe are the PIVS Programs?

A) Safety is our first priority. PIVS operates programs in carefully chosen areas that offer a safe environment for the volunteer. We take great strides to ensure the safety of our volunteers. We register our volunteer with their respective embassies or consular to inform them that we have they citizens in our project(s). We work with the local administration in all our projects and inform the government, the purpose of PIVS and its volunteers in these projects. We do community mobilization to inform them that they will be having visitors in their areas and require their full co-operation.

Q) Do I need to speak another language to volunteer?

A) Our programs do not require that you speak the local language. However, a basic knowledge of English is necessary to follow the instructions provided by the local staff.

No foreign language proficiency required. English is the official language .Learn some Swahili words if you can .However, nearly majority Kenyans understand and speak English well so communication should not be a problem.

Q) Do I need any specific skills to volunteer abroad?

A) No. Our placements are designed to accommodate all levels of skills and experience.

Q) Is there an orientation before I leave for the program?

A) We do two orientations once the volunteer arrives, there is an orientation that is done in our office and another orientation done at the project site.

Q) Will there be time to travel when I'm volunteering abroad?

A) Free time is available some afternoons, most evenings, and every weekend. Our local staff can give you suggestions for places to visit, or you can create your own agenda. During your weekend you can take excursions to other parts of the country, or you may choose not to travel, and stay in town to get to know the community better. You may also choose to travel before or after the program.

Q) What types of projects are available?

A) We offer volunteer work in the areas of education, health, social services, environment, micro finance, wildlife, creative arts, agriculture, human rights among others. We have a variety of projects to give volunteer(s) an opportunity to take part in these projects.

Q) Can I go on consecutive programs in different locations?

A) You can go to as many programs consecutively as you want; some of our volunteer(s) have gone on more than several programs at once! Each program has a separate program fee.

Q) How long can I volunteer?

A) The PIVS International Work camp program ranges from 2 - 3 weeks, all our work camps have start dates. Mid and long term programs ranges from 1 - 6 months. The projects are on going except for education projects i.e. Schools run from January - March - April - July, September - November, when applying for school projects keep in mind this dates. In addition when applying for a visa, apply for a tourist visa which is 3 months and while in Kenya you can renew the visa for another 3 months.

Q) I'm a pre-med student and I want to participate in PIVS program. How hands on will it be?

A) Your volunteer work will vary based on your level of knowledge and experience in the field of health. In most countries, only legally certified healthcare professionals can perform delicate hands-on work in medical settings. If you're not yet a licensed healthcare professional, your experience may be limited to observation. Keep in mind that you can still learn a great deal from observation; volunteers working in health clinics or hospitals have been able to help out in pediatric nutrition centers, change bandages, observe traditional medicine practices, and even sometimes observe surgeries and births.

Q) Working Hours

A) Depending on your project work, International Work camps, volunteer work from morning to afternoon i.e. 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. but this may depend with the project in other case volunteers may work in the afternoons i.e. 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Mid and long term programs work is from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. with lunch our break. Saturday afternoon and Sunday are free days.

Q) How do you determine my volunteer work?

A) We monitor and evaluate volunteer performance from time to time by using questionnaires or personal interviews together with the local community, as much as the volunteer sometimes they feel their input is minimal depending with time, the community appreciate the effort put by the volunteer and they know what is suitable to their needs, but we make sure the volunteer feels they input or goal is met.

Q) Will I have a specific work for my volunteer work, or will I be involved in more than one?

A) You will have a specific work, however depending on your skills, interests, and the need in the community, you may be involved in more than one. If you are unhappy with your project, we do our best to find another project that better suits your needs.

Q) Can you tell me more about the community organization I will be volunteering with?

A) This depends from project to project, location, work to be done, objective and volunteers skills, through experience community differ from one another, but we prepare and arrange the program together with the community and also identifying areas where volunteers may be needed depending

on their skills and experiences. We usually send a detailed information sheet regarding each specific project.

Q) What is included in the program fee?

A) The program fee includes accommodation and meals for the volunteer and running expenses for PIVS.

Q) Why do I need to pay to volunteer?

A) All PIVS programs, volunteer pay a participation fee which covers operating and logistics expenses. PIVS is an non governmental organization that does not operate for profit, neither is PIVS funded by any Government, donor or individual, our programs are self financing.

Q) What is your policy regarding payments? Are there any deadlines?

A) All payments will be done at our offices. PIVS doesn't accept monthly installments and payment is done on lump sum. If you wish to stay longer than your committed period, we will be happy to extend your volunteer program, so please notify PIVS to arrange the extension and payment details.

Q) Will I need extra money? If so, how much?

A) Carry extra money, you may need if you want to buy gifts or souvenirs for your friends/families, if you want to travel within the country or do a safari, the amount will also depend on your habit e.g. if you like drinking or going out, transport, buying personal stuff or shopping.

Q) Does PIVS offer health insurance?

A) No We advise our volunteer to have travel medical insurance which is mandatory requirement for a volunteer to participate our projects/programs.

Q) Which vaccinations do I need?

A) Please make sure you get the recommended immunization against Yellow fever, Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Hepatitis A and B, Meningitis, Typhoid fever, Rabies but the doctor will advice you more. In addition we recommend you get medicine for malaria and purchase a mosquito net, repellants.

Q) How far in advance do I need to apply?

A) We encourage you to apply at least 5 weeks before the start date of the program in which you plan to participate. We do accept applications with less advance notice if there is space available and enough time to take care of the necessary arrangements. Many start dates close each year due to reaching their maximum capacities and project completion in case of international work camp program, so we encourage you to apply as early as possible.

Q) What is your age requirement?

A) The minimum age requirement for volunteers in our programs is 18 years and above.

Q) Can I go in a group with friends, colleagues, or relatives?

A) Yes, you can go in a group as long as the program is not overbooked, depending on the size of your group.

Q) Who can volunteer at PIVS programs?

A) We welcome volunteers from all over the world to join the PIVS team.

Q) Do I need a visa in order to travel to PIVS program?

A) Visa requirements vary for each individual country and depend on your citizenship. You can apply for a Kenyan visa at the nearest consular office in your country. Alternatively you can apply for the visa at the airport Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). Please note there is no volunteer visa, so you will apply for a tourist visa which is a 3 months visa

Q) What to bring?

A) Working shoes preferably boots and clothes, mobile phone, sleeping bag; you can buy a mosquito net here it will cost roughly Euros 3 5. Flash light/torch, heavy and light clothing, iodine tablets for water purification, personal effects (i.e. soap, toiletries), first aid kit for minor ailments and cuts, family and friends photos, sunscreen lotion and other things that will make you comfortable during your stay here (**FORGET NOT YOUR SMILING FACE**)

Q) What the Fee Covers

A) The program fee is comprehensive. This ensures that the local communities we work with are not financially burdened by our volunteers.

- Volunteer Placement with one of staff including all the coordination in case of international work camp program, in-person visits in case of mid and long volunteer program and communication necessary with each local organization.
- PIVS provides you with a comfortable accommodation, safe place to live, the basic amenities, all of your meals.
- Experienced staff, to provide orientation, supervision and guidance throughout your stay.

Q) What is not included in the program fee?

- Costs associated with obtaining a visa or immunizations (when needed).
- International and domestic airfare and corresponding airport departure taxes.
- Personal Internet time and long-distance (domestic and international) phone calls.
- Laundry service
- Insurance, both general and medical.
- Recreation (going to safaris, alcohol, outings)
- Pocket money
- Transport (to and from site)
- Personal stuff (toilet paper, soaps, washing detergents)

Q) How will volunteers communicate with friends or families?

Volunteers can communicate with their families or friends back home via e-mail, telephone, mail and mobile which are locally available here. Communication should not cause worry, in addition the volunteers can still keep in touch with their families/friends even in rural areas via mobile and mail.