

KENYA CHILDREN'S HOME
VOLUNTEER INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Karibu Kenya!

KENYA CHILDREN'S HOMES

PO BOX 44261- 00100

Langata Road

Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: 601922/602002

Fax: 020 603605

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INTRODUCTION

Kenya Children's Home (KCH) (formerly Thomas Barnardo House) is home to approximately 180 children, all of whom are either orphaned, abandoned or from destitute situations. Within the home is a large nursery and nine individual accommodation units, each one home for between 10 and 15 children and their housemother. The housemothers are capably supported by the aunties, who step in and assume the duties when the housemothers take some time off. The babies are looked after in the nursery, either until they are adopted, or are old enough to enter one of the houses. The older children (aged 14 and over) attend boarding school during term-time but return to KCH for the holidays, whilst the younger children remain at the home during term and holiday.

More general information about Kenya Children's Home can be found by visiting the website www.kenyachildrenshome.org.uk which is managed from Kenya and the UK.

1.THE ACCOMMODATION

Akila 2 apartments
Block 3, Flat 2 & 7,
Off Mbgathi Way
Nairobi

[You can use this address on your visa form]

There are two comfortable, furnished apartments for the KCH volunteers. Both flats have three bedrooms, one of which is ensuite, a shower room with toilet and sink, a living/dining room, and a kitchen. The 4th floor apartment has a balcony and the ground floor apartment has what is more of a verandah, leading straight into the courtyard.

The living room is equipped with a TV & DVD player, so it's a good idea to bring CDs and DVDs as the TV channels, aside from the news (CNN, Sky News and BBC World Services), can be an acquired taste. The dining area comes complete with table and chairs, handy for communal dining and entertaining. There are also some books left over from previous volunteers, so, slowly but surely, a steady library is developing in each apartment. Please feel free to bring (and leave behind!) your own books or magazines. The kitchen is situated at the rear of the apartment with all mod cons, including a toaster, kettle, grill, microwave, oven and fridge with small freezer. Just off the kitchen is an area outside for washing and hanging clothes. The ground floor flat has a washing machine, which is for all the volunteers to use.

Drinking water is sold in large plastic containers at supermarkets and small shops. Most locals do not drink the water, so it's advisable to boil the tap water first, pour it through the ceramic filter provided and leave it to cool (or drink it warm like Kenyans!).

Plug fittings are of the three-point (UK) format for your appliances such as cameras, phones, etc. The power tends to be quite reliable but has been known to go off for a few hours when it rains heavily, so make sure you always have candles and matches and a torch and batteries in an easily accessible place.

There is a cleaner who services the block. Once a week she will clean the volunteer accommodation. **You** are responsible for keeping your own room and the communal areas of the apartment clean and tidy. There will be inspections from time to time. Please remember to dispose of your rubbish safely.

It's up to you whether you shop for yourself or whether you decide to subscribe to a house kitty. Some items, such as washing powder, you could chip in with flatmates to buy, or you might decide to go the whole hog and shop together for everything, or indeed completely separately. Please respect the privacy and possessions of your housemates.

2. LOCAL AREA

Judy Kiilu stays in apartment number 3 in the neighbouring block. She is the loveliest of people and is employed by Mrs Gloag to look after the apartment block. If any problems arise, they should be informed of the situation and will gladly help out. Peter Kamau, the head Social Worker at KCH, lives in your block as well, up on the 3rd floor.

Three or four minutes walk from 'Akila 2', the compound that the volunteers stay in, there is another apartment complex called 'Highrise'. Here you can find shops selling basic goods such as bread, milk, water, etc, a dry cleaner's, a shoe repair shop, and an internet café with payphone. Using this phone to make international calls is much cheaper than using your mobile.

'Akila 2' is a 10 to 15-minute walk from the Jonathan Gloag Academy (JGA) gates (along Mbgathi Way), through which access to the school and orphanage is possible. The short walk does involve a major road that frequently has car accidents, so be careful – remember that cars won't stop for you here! There is now a pedestrian bridge, which makes your commute much less terrifying! Opposite the Kenya Children's Home main entrance gate there is Wilson Airport (Langata Road), where there is another internet café which charges 1Ksh per minute for email/internet access. It tends to be slower in the afternoon, so it's best to go in the morning. There are also a couple of cafes in this area, including Midway Café and Dambusters. Just along a bit is the Uchumi supermarket for most of your shopping requirements. For taking out money, there is the exchange bank, where you can use your visa, or in Wilson Airport departure area there is a pesa point (cash-line). Most supermarkets (including Nakumatt and Uchumi) will have a cash-line machine as well. A large new shopping Mall has been built at the other end of Langata Road, left out of the gates. This is closer about a five minute walk. With a bank, Tuskey supermarket, a café and a variety of other shops.

2.1 Kibera

'Kibera' is the name of the largest slum in Kenya, second largest in the whole of Africa. It has a population of 1.2 million people, which is more than half of Nairobi's population. It lies close by to the site of JGA and KCH. Bustling with life and commerce, Kibera cannot be missed, especially with its active railway line running straight through it! It is also where the 'Bread Box' and 'Mashimoni School' (two projects linked with KCH) are located. To get the most out of a visit, a tour guide is essential, and there are always more than enough people in and around the home who would be delighted to take you.

3. POST

Post should be sent to:
c/o Thomas Barnardo House
PO Box 44261-00100 GPO
Langata, Nairobi

Due to your fixed working hours it's best, and often most convenient, to send post by asking one of the drivers to take your letters to the post office, and giving them the money to pay for the postage.

4. UPON ARRIVAL

You will be collected from the airport and taken to 'Akila 2' by our host / hostess volunteer and a driver. There will be a welcome pack of basic supplies at your accommodation, the essentials of bread, milk, water, orange juice, tea bags, biscuits, crisps, cereal, and fruit. Depending upon when you arrive by day or night flight, you will be given time to relax and then be taken on an orientation. You'll be introduced to the other volunteers, the staff, the children, and the surroundings.

Volunteers work according to an established rota. You will be given a copy and everything will be explained to you. The Volunteer Policy that you signed at interview has most of the rules and regulations set out and your fellow volunteers should be able to answer any of your questions. The host / hostess volunteer is your mediator should you have any grievances, he / she will approach the KCH administrator on your behalf.

5. PHONECALLS

In the past, most volunteers have bought a cheap, new mobile and SIM card locally. Calls are much cheaper this way and it reduces the risk of theft of your own mobile from home. Others have made sure their phone is unlocked before coming out and just bought a SIM card for a local network, such as Safaricom. Either way works well, but don't get caught in the trap of thinking that just because your network automatically changed to a local one, that your tariff will be cheap, because it won't be! It is very expensive to use your phone in this way, whichever network you're with.

Credit is sold at the KCH thrift shop and plenty of other places too. International texts tend to cost 10Ksh, and phone calls are also quite cheap, but it is cheaper still to use a payphone at an internet outlet.

6. PERSONAL SAFETY

For your personal safety it's always best not to walk around by yourself, and never ever travel alone after dark. Try and stick with fellow volunteers as much as possible to ensure safety. Don't carry valuables around with you – you can leave them safely in your flat [your own room can be locked]. It might be a good idea to buy a thin money belt and distribute your money between it and your pockets. Never carry a large amount of notes rolled up. Always be aware of your surroundings and use common sense.

7. TRANSPORT

The Balcraig Foundation does not recommend Matatus. Matatus are the little minibuses that race up and down all the main thoroughfares. There have been several safety issues with overcrowding and lack of seatbelts, plus the drivers do not have to be registered. Taxis and 'City Hoppa' buses are a far better alternative.

Taxi numbers

Useful contacts

Taxi drive	Telephone no	Contact	Telephone no
Raymond	0722697690	Lawrence	0722915974
Hodari	0722522957	TBH landline	[00254] 20602002

8. PLACES TO VISIT/EAT ETC.

You don't get that much time off when you are volunteering so it's worth your while to plan your 'downtime' to make the most of your stay in Kenya. It may be that, if you intend to travel, you can arrange beforehand for your return flight to be put back so you can experience more of this vast continent at the end of the volunteering attachment. However, you must ask permission from Mrs. Gloag first, otherwise you may not be allowed to use the accommodation once you have finished working at the orphanage. 'Lonely Planet's' guide to Kenya has a lot of the information you will need, but here are some of the most popular day-trip destinations for the local area:

Yaya Centre – a very westernised shopping centre for clothes, souvenirs, etc. There's a food court, hairdressers, supermarket and anything else you need. There's a market in the car park on the Sunday, which is a good place for souvenir shopping. Remember to haggle!

Hurlingham

Sarit Centre – for cinema, supermarket, large food court. A great shop for arts/crafts materials and stationary called ‘Text Book Centre’.

Parklands Road

Splash Swimming – for swimming and go-carting.

Near ‘Uchumi’ supermarket in ‘Karen’, via Langata Road

Carnivore Restaurant – world-famous restaurant popular with youthful partygoers.

Near ‘Uchumi’, off Langata Road

Nairobi National Park – Nairobi is the only city in the world to have a National Game Park within its boundaries. Over fifty different species of mammal can be seen on the game drive, safari walk or in the animal orphanage.

Langata Road

Elephant Orphanage – for the elephant lovers.

Edge of Nairobi National Park

Bomas of Kenya – for a taste of Kenyan culture including traditional music and dances, cuisine and a look at the homesteads of various Kenyan communities.

Langata Road, outskirts of city

Karen – Karen Blixen museum [named after the heroine of ‘Out of Africa’], Giraffe centre, Ostrich Park, Mamba village.

Karen

9. VOLUNTEERING DUTIES

When you arrive you will be given a timetable to follow by Mrs Kiraithe, the Chief Administrator. Your prescribed duties will vary depending on whether it is holiday or term time, but sometimes (depending on how many are there) other volunteers can cover a duty for you if you are unwell or unable to do it for any reason.

A description of the main duties, including ‘games’, ‘clubs’ and ‘homework’, is provided in a separate document entitled ‘Volunteer Duties Description’, a copy of which you will also be given on arrival at the Home in Nairobi.

9.1 General duties

Refer to ‘Volunteer Duties Description’.

All volunteers must participate in homework supervision after school, Friday fellowship, Saturday activities, and Church on Sunday mornings.

On Sundays the children attend either Mamlaka Hill Chapel or Don Bosco Catholic Church. They are accompanied by the housemothers and the volunteers. Church duty basically involves travelling with the children on the bus to and from Church, and just being a helpful presence throughout the morning. *All volunteers must attend Church every Sunday*, either with the younger children in Sunday School or joining the others in the main service. The bus leaves the Home at 9.30am [8.30am for Don Bosco] and returns as soon as the service has finished. By attending the Church with the children the volunteers can get to know the children outside the context of the Home, and it sets the children a good example. KCH is founded upon Christian principles and it is vital that the children follow them.

9.2 School duties

Jonathan Gloag Academy [JGA] is divided into two wings:

Junior Wing	Senior Wing
Baby class	Standard 4 [9-10 yrs]
Nursery class	Standard 5 [10-11 yrs]
Pre-unit	Standard 6 [11-12 yrs]
Standard 1 [6-7 yrs]	Standard 7 [12-13 yrs]
Standard 2 [7-8 yrs]	Standard 8 [13-14 yrs]
Standard 3 [8-9 yrs]	

Classes 1 to 3 are taught at the Junior school campus whilst Pre-unit and classes 4 to 8 are taught at the Senior school and Kindergarten campus.

If you indicated that your strengths lie with sport, or arts and crafts, then you may be assigned to help out at JGA. The best person to see about arranging a teaching timetable is Teacher Maureen, the Deputy Head, who is very friendly and will gladly assist the volunteers with any queries.

Arts and Crafts lessons

These are normally taught at the Junior school, so for children of around 7-9 years old. The pupils are experienced with arts and crafts at many different levels, so you will need to assess them in your own way before starting any really ambitious projects. If one activity works particularly well in one lesson, however, it can be used for the whole

Junior wing, so don't feel you have to do something different with each class. This also simplifies planning as regards resources.

In the past, volunteers have asked the children to bring in specific items such as card or bottles, for certain projects. This seems to work well as it not only ensures that fun activities are made possible, but it also encourages a sense of responsibility and forward planning in the child. As a general rule, though, please design activities that require few resources so that whatever is available can be used to supplement your lessons. Feel free to bring anything with you, but you will probably find that you can get essential resources at the 'Text Book Centre' mentioned before.

If you'd like to cross over what you teach with their other subjects, such as history or social studies, then just speak to their class teachers, as they will be happy to make suggestions. Also, make sure that some of their work is displayed to give an extra incentive to take pride over it.

Chaperoning Swimming

Most classes go once a week for swimming lessons, but the teachers don't usually swim with the children. Volunteers are welcome to join the children on their trip, but you don't necessarily have to swim. The pool is in the open air, so, if you do decide to swim, bring a t-shirt and strong suntan lotion. You may be asked to assist the instructors or take a class, if you feel confident, but otherwise, you can use this time to read, lesson plan or just sunbathe. The children enjoy the volunteers swimming with them, but please be aware of personal space as they tend to overcrowd you!

P.E. lessons – BRING A WHISTLE!!!

P.E. lessons are taught to one year-group at a time, so around 40 children will be participating. For example, one morning you may take class 4B and 4R together, and in the afternoon, 6B and 6R. Quite often, it isn't clear where the class will emerge from so it's a good idea to wait around the school until the children wearing P.E. kit begin to appear. They will have been told whether to go the games field or the basketball court [the two spaces available], so the more flexible you are with ideas or lesson plans for each space, the better. Each pupil belongs to a house group: red, blue, green or yellow, and they enjoy playing as teams against the other houses – the colour of their t-shirts is a great visual demonstration of which group they belong to! Sometimes, the teacher will have something in mind and ask you to take over, or just assist, but the majority of the time the teacher will give you total freedom with what you can do. In other words, every time you are scheduled for a P.E. lesson, plan ahead as though you have to take the lesson on your own, so you don't get caught out!

The children love to play competitive games, and especially ones they have never played before, so feel free to teach them new games that they can remember and play with other volunteers. If you have any knowledge of technique or skills required in certain games, such as football or basketball, then it would certainly benefit the children to be taught these things. They will often just want to play a straightforward game, but you will find

that as they get better at the drills and activities you give them, they begin to enjoy them, and are appreciative of the variety and usefulness of the exercises.

Games lessons at the school are of different nature, however, in that you will be taking many more children at one time; either the entire Senior school or the entire Junior school. Usually, the Senior school pupils divide themselves up between the basketball court and the football pitch, and you may lead one group for part of the time and then swap, or remain with one group for the whole session. The Junior school pupils [approx 150] normally all remain on the games field, though, and you may be asked to instruct them in some warm up exercises or aerobics, followed by some team games. Teachers from the Junior school will be present to help organise them, but it may be entirely up to you as to what to do with them! So be prepared, and **remember to bring a whistle!!!**

Other duties

There will be other duties you are asked to do within the school, from marking homework [even Kiswahili homework, which is an interesting exercise!] and making posters, to invigilating exams. Exams take place every term when both wings are tested. Your job would be to hand out papers, notify students of any changes to instructions and to ensure exam conditions within the classroom. There is normally a coordinator who will brief you before each exam, so get there a few minutes earlier than the timetable states.

9.3 Reception duties

Although there is a receptionist working full time at the Home, there may be times when reception is unattended, in which case volunteers may be asked to cover for a short time. All necessary training will be given in such circumstances, but here is a basic guideline to follow:

- When a visitor arrives, ask their name, their reason for being there and whether they have an appointment. Ask them to take a seat, then notify the person they wish to see of their presence. You will then be given instructions as to what do next.

Other duties include keeping the reception area tidy, transferring calls, taking messages, typing up minutes etc. There is a file at the reception desk explaining everything you may need to do, which you can browse through when you arrive or else as part of your training.

10. COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

KCH has introduced several commercial projects to increase self-sufficiency, particularly with the Home's finances. These include:

- **Westminster Project** – organises weddings and functions. These are highly successful and are held most Saturdays on the field, in which catering, dress-hire,

car and PA system are all provided as part of the package. This project not only generates income, but increases awareness, and the reputation of the Home.

- **Kelvin Loaf Bread Project [sponsored by Kelvinside Academy]** – a wide range of products such as bread, queen cakes, mandazi [Kenyan sweet bread] etc. are sold to individuals, and to retailers, who then sell the products themselves, as a way of encouraging local business. Donations are also received by the Home to buy some of the bread that is made to enable it to be distributed to other orphanages throughout Nairobi, outreach projects, and other needy causes. As well as supporting KCH, this scheme supports children who are in desperate need in the surrounding area.
- **Kelvin Crafts-** Set up to give girls a training in dress making. They make a variety of crafts and clothes which are sold in Kenya as well as here in Scotland.
- **Thrift Shop** – situated at the Home, the Thrift Shop sells sodas, bakery products, first and second-hand clothes and more, to bring in money for KCH.
- **Poshomill Project** – makes flour: wimbi, to make ugali an important part of the Kenyan staple diet, and uji, to make porridge. These types of flour are then sold to local retailers, as well as being sold by the Thrift Shops.
- **Jonathan Gloag Academy** – as a fee-paying school, JGA can support Kenya Children’s Home financially, and, more significantly, by schooling the children.

GOOD LUCK

ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

11. TRAVELLER’S CHECKLIST

Clothes:

Underwear

Swimwear

Pyjamas

t-shirts and vests

long-sleeved tops

jumpers/cardigans

shorts/3 quarter trousers

combats/jeans/trousers

sandals/flipflops

trainers

wellies/boots [it can get very muddy!] – sturdy footwear is essential for travel into Kibera since there are no roads, pavements, or sewage systems.

raincoat/waterproof

sunhat/baseball cap

For the men:

shirts

ties

dress shoes

dress trousers/smart trousers

For the ladies:

smart clothes [not revealing]

secure handbag

Toiletries:

aftershave/perfume – this can be purchased in Kenya but is very expensive as it is all imported.

Any cosmetics you think you won't be able to find.

Make-up

Medical supplies:

malaria tablets

mosquito spray/afterbite

sunscreen lotion

aftersun lotion

simple first aid kit/plasters

headache tablets

[a mosquito net is provided at the accommodation]

Other items:

sunglasses

sportswear
rucksack
money belt
torch
camera with lead and charger
extra camera memory card/spools
CDs
Mp3player/CD player/rechargeable batteries

NB: Towels and linen are provided.

******During the rainy seasons [Mar-May and Oct-Nov] it can rain heavily, so appropriate wear is essential. It can sometimes get cold, so bring jumpers/light jackets.******

Power cuts are infrequent but do occur, especially when it rains, so bring a torch (head torches are particularly useful) and something to read!!!

Traveller's Visa:

You can get your visa when you arrive at the airport in Nairobi, but you must pay in US dollars. It cost \$50 for a visa, which lasts 3 months, so you must renew it near the end of this time if you are staying longer than this. [Bring two passport photos with you]. You can download a visitor's visa and fill it in before you go to beat the queues at the airport. <http://www.kenyahighcommission.net/visas.html>

Money:

It's a better exchange rate in Kenya so bring your own currency to change money (make sure you bring English and not Scottish notes), or just use your ATM bank card [Visa, Mastercard etc.] to take Kenya shillings directly out of a cash point when you arrive. Although most, if not all, cards work, it's best to double check with your bank first [watch transaction charges]. Also, remember that **you must have adequate travel and personal insurance** for the duration of your stay.

12. Simple Swahili

Key words and phrases

Kiswahili

Habari yako?
Habari ya...
Asubuhi
Jioni
Leo
Siku
Siku njema
Mzuri sana
Salama
Lala salama
Mambo?
Nyaje
Poa
Asante [sana]
Karibu
Nataka
Ndiyo
Hapana
Hebu
Pole
Sema tena pole pole
Samahani?
Twende
[Pesa] ngapi?
Sijui
Saa ngapi?
Wapi choo?
Ghali sana
Rahisi
Rafiki
Hapa
Wapi?
Lini?
Kwa nini?
Nini?
Nani?
Mimi/ni
Wewe/u
Yeye
A
Jena
Kesho
Kwa heri

English

How are you? [lit: what's your news?]
How is your ...?
morning
evening
today/day
night
good day [when wishing someone good day, confusingly]
very well [lit: very fine]
well/peaceful
sleep well
what ya' sayin'? [informal]
how's it goin'? [informal]
cool
thank you [very much]
[you're] welcome
I want ...
yes
no
excuse me [let me through]
sorry
say it again slowly
Pardon?
let's go/carry on
how much [... money is it?] ...?
I don't know
what time is it?
where are the toilets?
very expensive
cheap
friend
here
where?
when?
why?
who?
what?
me/I
you
him/her
he/she
yesterday
tomorrow
goodbye [see you tomorrow]